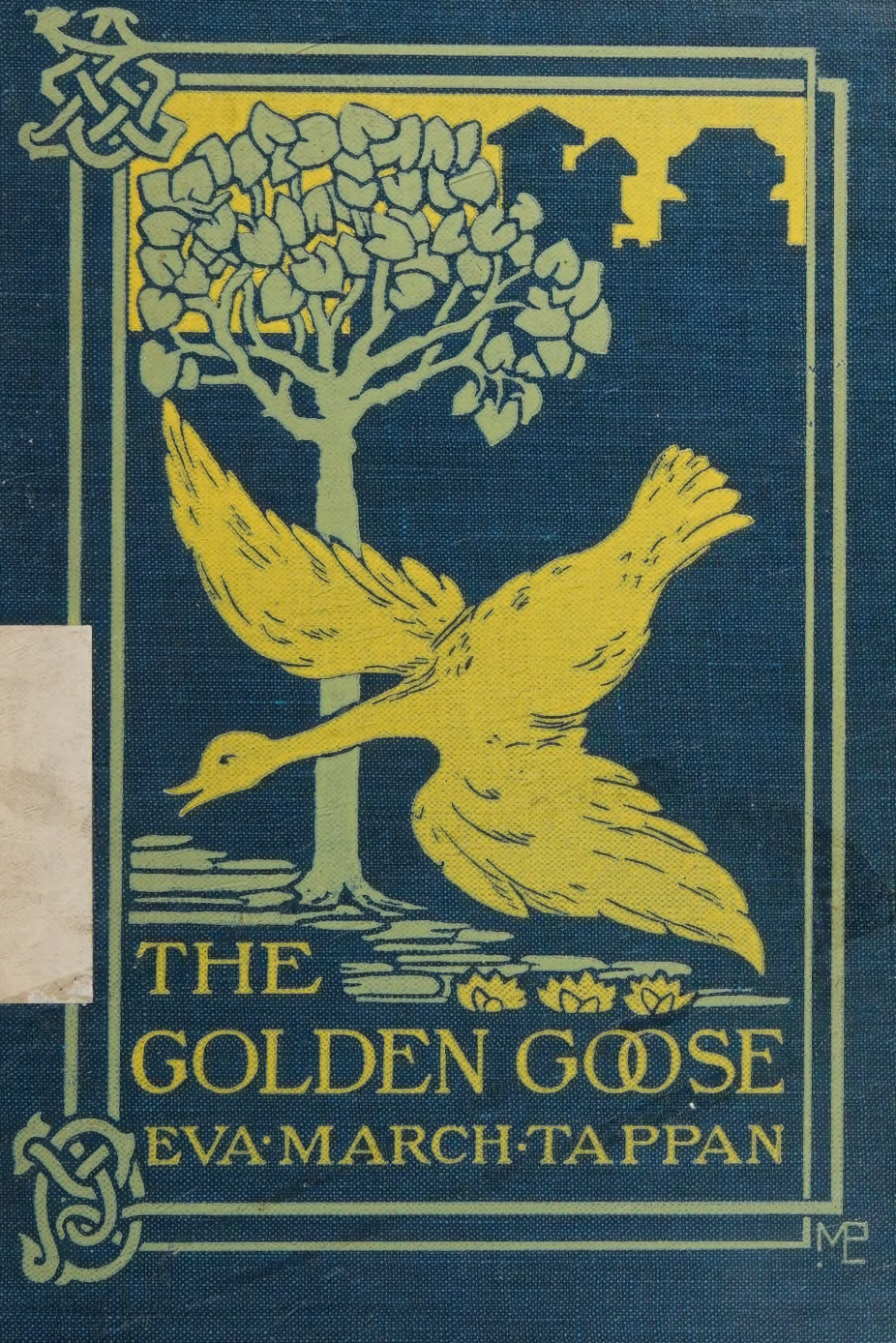
THE
GOLDEN GOOSE
EVA·MARCH·TAPPAN

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By Eva March Tappan

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HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

THE GOLDEN GOOSE

and

Other Fairy Tales

THE GOLDEN GOOSE

AND OTHER FAIRY TALES

TRANSLATED FROM THE SWEDISH

BY

EVA MARCH TAPPAN

Author of Old Ballads in Prose, A Short History of England's Literature, Our Country's Story, England's Story, etc.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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THE GOLDEN GOOSE

THE GOLDEN GOOSE

ONCE upon a time a king and a queen had an only daughter. Her forehead was so white that when people looked at it they cried, "Oh, the little white rose!" and her cheeks were so red that no one who saw them could help exclaiming, "Oh, the little red rose!" For this reason it came to pass that the child was known throughout the kingdom as the Little Rose.

When the princess was five years old, the queen died. The king mourned for her with all his heart, and every time that he looked at Little Rose he felt even more sad, for he thought, "She has no mother to love her

and care for her." After a while he met a widow who had a daughter of about the same age as his. He said to himself, "The widow has a child of her own and surely she will be good to my little girl," and he asked her to marry him. She was really very disagreeable and spiteful; but she had carefully hidden her hatefulness, for she thought it would be a fine thing to be a queen and live in a palace, and now she was very ready to say yes.

The queen's daughter was named Leda; but she was so tall and awkward that every one called her Long Leda. The two children were unlike in other respects than in looks, for the king's daughter was gentle and kind, while the queen's daughter was haughty and disobliging. Of course every one loved Little Rose and disliked Long Leda; therefore both Leda and her mother were jealous of Little Rose and did everything in their power to annoy her. Whenever any task was given to Leda, she did it or not, as she chose, for she knew that Little

Rose would have it to do if she left it undone. In spite of such treatment, however, Little Rose was so cheerful and sweet-tempered that she was not unhappy; and she was so gentle and forgiving that she never told her father how badly they behaved toward her.

It happened one day that the queen and Long Leda were going to take a walk in the orchard.

"You are to go with us," said the queen to Little Rose, "for we may need you to wait upon us."

In the orchard they met the gardener, who was standing beside a tree and looking at it closely.

"What is the matter with it?" asked the queen.

"This branch is rotten," he replied. "It must be cut away, but I have left my axe on the other side of the orchard. Hallo!" he called to his man, "go and get my axe."

"You need not call the man from his work," said the queen. "Rosa can bring the axe."

"Oh!" cried the gardener in amazement, "that would never do for a princess."

"What do you mean by objecting to what I command?" shrieked the queen. Then she turned upon Little Rose and cried: —

"You lazy, disobedient girl, what are you waiting for? You know well enough that you ought to have gone for the axe and been back here long ago."

Little Rose ran away in search of the axe. She found it lying on the ground, and on the handle three white doves were perched. She did not like to drive them

away, but she must have the axe, so she said to them gently :—

"Dear little doves, won't you please come off the axe? I must carry it to my step-mother." In her pocket were some bits of bread left from her breakfast. She crumbled them and held them up to the doves. They ate from her hand and hopped off the axe-handle. She scattered the rest of the bread on the ground near them, caught up the axe, and hurried away with it.

Before Little Rose had taken many steps, the doves put their tiny heads together and began to talk about the little girl who had been so kind to them and so gentle.

"We must give her a reward," said one, "and my gift is that she shall be twice as pretty as she was before."

"My gift," said the second, "is that her hair shall be changed into pure gold."

"And my gift," said the third, "is that whenever she smiles, a ring of red, red gold shall drop from between her lips."

The doves flew away, nobody knows whither; but everything came to pass just as they had promised; and when Little Rose returned with the axe, the queen and Long Leda and the gardener all stared in amazement, for she was twice as beautiful as before and her hair shone like the purest gold. They soon saw something else even more astounding; for as she gave the axe to the gardener, she smiled at him pleasantly, and a ring of red, red gold dropped from between her lips. It is no wonder that he forgot to cut away the rotten branch.

The queen looked straight at Little Rose; then, without speaking a word, she took the child by the hand and led her into the palace and into the farthest room in the farthest tower.

"Now do you tell me everything that has happened," she commanded. "Don't you dare to keep one thing back."

Little Rose, however, did not know that anything had happened. She could only say:

"The axe was lying on the ground and

three white doves were perched on the handle. They hopped off, and I brought the axe back to you."

Then the queen thought and thought. She thought for a whole day, and she said to herself enviously: —

"How beautiful she is! Her hair shines like pure gold, and a ring of red, red gold comes dancing from between her lips whenever she smiles!" When night came, the queen lay awake hour after hour, pondering how Leda could be made as beautiful as Little Rose. Early in the morning she gave an order to the gardener.

"Leave your axe just where you left it yesterday," she commanded. "Take your stand beside the tree with the rotten branch and say exactly what you said yesterday."

An hour later the queen called the two girls, and they went as before to walk in the orchard. The gardener stood beside the tree with the rotten branch and called to his man to bring the axe.

"You need not call the man from his work," said the queen. "My daughter can bring the axe."

"Oh," cried the gardener, "that would never do for a princess, — but she 's no princess," he muttered to himself.

"I will attend to that matter," replied the queen, and turning to Long Leda she said:—

"My dear child, go and get the axe for me. You won't be sorry," she added quickly, for she saw that the girl was about to refuse.

Leda was much surprised that *she* should be told to do such a thing. "I 'll make her give me something nice to pay for this," she said to herself; and then she set out leisurely on her way across the orchard. The axe had been left lying on the ground, and this day also the three white doves were perched on its handle.

"Get off, you horrid things," cried Leda, "or else I will make you. Who told you that you might sit on the axe that I have to carry to my mother?" Without waiting a moment, she caught up a handful of gravel

from the walk and threw it at them. They hopped aside, perched on the ground a little way off, and stood there watching her. Leda went away again, dragging the axe carelessly over the gravel. While she was crossing the orchard, the little doves were talking together about her.

"So cross and unkind a girl as that ought to be punished," they agreed.

The first dove said: —

"She shall be twice as homely as she was before."

The second dove said: —

"Her hair shall be like a tangle of briars."

"And my gift," said the third, "is that whenever she laughs, a cold, fat toad shall hop from between her lips."

Leda did not know that anything had happened; but the queen and the gardener and Little Rose were horrified when they caught sight of her, for every word that the doves had spoken had come true; she was twice as homely as before, and her hair was like the worst tangle of briars that was ever

seen. She threw the axe at the gardener's feet and said, "There, take your axe!" and then the most dreadful thing of all came to pass, for she could not help laughing when she remembered how she had driven away the doves, and as she laughed a cold, fat

toad dropped out from between her lips. The queen took her daughter by the hand and led her into the palace. What she said to her no one ever knew.

Now the queen hated Little Rose more than ever. Night and day she pondered how to get rid of her; and at last she hit upon a plan. There was a vessel all ready

to sail to a faraway country, and she sent to the captain and bade him come to her secretly after nightfall. She took him to the farthest room in the farthest tower and whispered in his ear: —

"I will give you broad green forest lands and a great bag of gold pieces if you will carry the king's daughter away to-morrow night and drown her in the deepest part of the sea."

The captain answered boldly: —

"No, indeed, my lady. I could never do such a thing as that."

But the queen brought out the bag of gold pieces and said: —

"It is only a little service that I ask of you, and you shall have all these if you obey me." Then she poured the gold pieces out in a great shining heap. The captain had never seen so much money in his life, and he was so dazzled by its glitter that he agreed to do what the queen wished.

The following night the queen awoke

Little Rose, gave her the bag of gold pieces, and said: —

"Go and carry this to the captain of the ship that is about to sail."

It was dark and lonely, but Little Rose took the bag without a word and carried it to the captain. As soon as she was on board the vessel, he hoisted the sails and pushed out from the land. The queen had stolen down to the shore to make sure that her plan did not fail, and when she knew that the vessel had really sailed with Little Rose on board, her wicked heart leaped for joy.

The ship sailed far, far away; but when it was exactly over the place where the water is deepest, so furious a storm arose that it went to the bottom and every one on board was drowned except the princess. The waves bore her up and carried her to a green island and laid her down softly on the beach. It was lonely on the island, for no one lived there, and she often walked on the shore, gazing far out over the sea and wishing that her father would come with

LITTLE ROSE TOOK THE BAG AND CARRIED IT TO THE CAPTAIN

one of his ships and carry her away with him.

One day she came upon the body of a little fawn which had been killed by a fall from a cliff.

"It is a pity that the falcons or some other birds of prey should not have this," she said to herself. "I will put it where they can see it more easily." So saying, she hung the little body on a pole. She was so tired then that she lay down on the grass and fell asleep. She was awakened by sweeter singing than she had ever heard before. "I must be dreaming," she thought, and she sat up and looked around her. The body of the fawn was gone, but where it had hung there now stood a green-spreading linden-tree, and what had been the fawn's head was now a little nightingale that was perched upon the very top of the tree. It was this that was singing so sweetly; and every little leaf of the linden was joining in the music, so that there was a most marvelous harmony.

After that day Little Rose never felt quite

so lonely on the green island; for whenever she was inclined to be sorrowful, she went to the singing linden, and in a moment she was happy again. Of course she could not forget her home, and often she would sit on the shore under the linden and watch the waves and think of the far distant homeland to which she could not go. One day while she was sitting there, she saw a ship come sailing over the sea. On board were many brave men, commanded by a young king who had gone forth in search of adventures. As the ship came nearer the island, they heard the beautiful music.

"Where can that wonderful music come from?" exclaimed the king.

Some of the older men among his followers shook their heads and said: —

"Such music as that must come from an enchanted country. Let us turn the rudder and go far away from the dangerous place."

"No," declared the king, "I mean to find the bird that sings like that." He steered straight up to the island and sprang ashore.

The music grew clearer and clearer. Soon he found that it came from a linden-tree, and under the linden sat a young girl. Her forehead was like a white rose, her cheeks were like red roses, and her hair shone like the purest gold. The young king took off his white-plumed hat, bowed low before her and asked:

"Is it you, fair maiden, who rules over this island?"

"Truly, it may well be so, for there is no one else here but me," she replied.

"And are you a fairy or a human being?" he cried, for she seemed to him to become more beautiful every moment.

"I am called Little Rose," she answered simply. "My father is the king of a distant land. I was shipwrecked and thrown on this island alone, for every one else was drowned."

Then the king looked straight into her eyes and entreated: —

"Dear princess, will you go home with me and be my queen?"

"Yes," the princess answered; for the young stranger had seemed as fair to her as she to him, and she would have gone to the end of the world with him. "I must take my linden and my nightingale with me," she added.

"Surely," said the king. So princess and linden and nightingale were all taken to the king's ship and carried away to his castle; and there the king and the princess had a most magnificent wedding. The linden-tree was planted in the castle garden, and it throve as well as on the island. The nightingale sang, the linden leaves played, and the whole place was glad and happy.

After Little Rose and the young king had been married two years, they had a little son, and Little Rose thought, "How happy my father would be if he could know that he has a grandson!" She sent a messenger to her own country to say to her father: —

"Your Little Rose is alive. She is married to a powerful king and she has a little boy."

When the king and his people

heard this, they were so happy that they fancied the sun danced for joy. The only persons in all the land who were not glad were the old queen and her daughter. All this time they had thought that Little Rose was lying at the bottom of the deepest part of the sea; but now they knew that she would come to see her father and would tell him what they had done. At last they concluded that nothing but magic would save them. The queen went to see a wicked old witch who had sometimes aided her in her evil plans; and when she came home, she brought a package with her which she hid away in the farthest corner of the farthest room of the farthest tower. Then she went to the king and said: —

"It is a long time since I have seen Little Rose, and I want to go and visit her and her newborn son." The king could not go with her, as she knew very well; but he was much pleased to have her go, and he wished her all success.

When she arrived at the castle, she re-

ceived a most kindly welcome; for the young king knew nothing of her wickedness, and Little Rose no longer thought of the wrong that had been done her. The queen pretended to be very fond of Little Rose; and when she was ready to start for home she said: —

"You know that I always loved you, and as a little token of my love I have brought you a little gift so you may remember me after I am gone." Then she brought out a superb silken robe. It was richly embroidered with pearls, and every seam was sewed up with a thread of gold. Little Rose never dreamed of any trickery. She thanked the queen most affectionately, and the wicked woman set out for home.

Some days later, Little Rose took out the beautiful robe to try it on. Hardly had she thrown it over her shoulders before the magic took effect. She was changed into a goose, and in a moment she had flown out of the window and dropped into the water. She looked just like other geese except

that she was more beautiful than they, for her golden hair had turned into golden feathers.

At the instant that this occurred, the linden-tree ceased to play and the nightingale suddenly became silent. Every one felt that something terrible had happened, and the young king and his servants began to search the palace in alarm. When they came to the queen's room, there lay the handsome robe on the floor, but the queen was nowhere to be found. The king and the people of the palace and the whole kingdom fell into the deepest sorrow.

Not long after this the king's chief fisherman went out one moonlight evening to look at his nets, and he caught sight of a goose with golden feathers which was floating on the waves. He and his men thought this was a great marvel; but the next night something happened that was even more marvelous, for the golden goose floated slowly toward them, bowed its graceful head in greeting, and said:—

"Good evening, fisherman. How goes it at my home in the palace?

"Does my linden-tree play?
Does my nightingale sing?
Does my little son weep?
Does anything gladden the heart of the king?"

The fisherman replied: —

"Nothing goes well in the castle.

"The linden-tree does not play,
The nightingale does not sing,
The little son weeps both night and day,
And nothing gladdens the heart of the king."

Then the golden goose sighed and said:

"How wretched am I now
Whom on the waves you see!
I cannot be again
That which I used to be.

Good-night, fisherman. I shall come here twice more, but after that never again;" and in a moment the goose had gone.

The fisherman rowed straight to the shore and told the young king what he had seen and heard.

"And I know it was the voice of the queen," he said.

"Catch the golden goose," the king commanded. "Bring it to me and I will give you a great reward."

The next night, therefore, when the fisherman went out, he took nets with him to catch the goose if it should appear. He had not long to wait, for soon it came floating over the waves straight toward the boat. It asked the same questions as before, and the fisherman answered in the same way. Then it said:—

"Good-night, fisherman. I shall come here once more, and after that never again."

It turned to swim away, but the fisherman and his men threw their nets over it. Then it cried most piteously: —

"Let me go or else hold fast!
Let me go or else hold fast!"

In a moment it was no longer a golden goose; but first a serpent, then a dragon, and then all sorts of fierce and dangerous wild beasts, one after another. The men let go their nets and rowed away for their lives, and the goose escaped.

When they told the king what had happened, he was disappointed and angry. He said to the fisherman: —

"All this story of dragons and serpents is nothing but fancy. The golden goose will come only once more, and if you let it escape this time, you and every one of your men shall lose your heads."

On the third night the fisherman rowed

out, and again the golden goose floated up to the boat and asked the same questions. The same answers were given, and the goose said sadly: —

"Good-night, fisherman. I shall never come again, never again."

It would have swum away, but the fisherman and his men threw their nets over it; and this time, although it turned into one savage wild beast after another, as it had done before, they held on firmly, for they said to themselves, "We may escape from the beasts, but we cannot escape from the king's headsman."

So it was that the golden goose was caught. It was carried to the king and so closely guarded that it could not fly away. At first the king was glad; but the bird would never speak to him, and at last he came to feel more unhappy than he had been when he believed that the queen was dead. He shut himself up in his rooms and gave orders that whoever came to see him should be turned away.

Some time afterwards an old woman came to the castle steps and begged for just one word with the king.

"No," declared the guard, "the king is too sad to see any one."

"I know that," said the woman, "and that is just why I have come."

The guard looked at her closely and he said to himself: —

"She is not quite like other folk. She may be one of those strange people that live in the Underworld; and no one can tell what she knows and what she does not know." "Wait here," he bade. Then he went to the king's door and said softly:

"My Lord King, there is a woman on the castle steps who says she has come to help you in your trouble. She seems to be one of the witch people of the Underworld, and sometimes they have all sorts of strange knowledge."

"You may bring her in," said the king wearily, for he had little hope of any aid from her.

The old woman came in and curtsied humbly; and the king asked: —

"What is it that you want?"

"My Lord King," she replied, "I have heard that your queen has been changed into a golden goose and that you mourn for her by day and by night. I can set her free; but you must promise to do me a favor in return."

"What is it?" cried the king. "I will do anything to get my own beloved wife again."

"You know that mountain over across the black river?" asked the woman. The king nodded, and she went on. "Your cattle go up there on the mountain side to graze. They trample about, and low, and make a great noise, and my children and I never have any quiet. The favor that I ask is that you will have your men build a stone wall around the mountain so that the cattle will not come up on the roof of my house any more."

"Give me back my wife," cried the king,

"and I will build you seven walls, or seventy if you will."

"First, I have a long story to tell you," said the witch-woman. Then she told him how the old queen had treated Little Rose, and last of all, how she had brought the enchanted robe that had made all the trouble.

The king could hardly believe his own ears. "That kindhearted old queen!" he cried. "She can't have done such a wicked thing!"

"Did you take good care of the embroidered robe that was left behind in the queen's chamber on the day that she disappeared?" asked the witch-woman.

"Yes," the king replied, and he himself brought it from his treasure room and gave it to her.

"Now let us go to the room where the golden goose is shut up," said the witch-woman.

The king unfastened the doors; and when they came to the room of the golden goose,

the witch-woman went straight up to her and threw the robe over her head, saying: —

"Be undone what has been done."

In an instant the wicked charm was broken. The queen took her own form, and instead of a golden goose she was once more a beautiful woman with golden hair.

The people in the most distant corner of the palace knew that something good had come to pass, because they suddenly began to feel so happy; and when they heard the nightingale sing and the linden-tree play, they were sure that their beloved queen had returned to them. They dropped whatever they were doing, and came running from every part of the house to greet her; and soon there was rejoicing throughout the land.

The king thanked the witch-woman over and over again and loaded her with gifts. When she left for home, he sent workmen with her to build a wall around the mountain.

"Build it so high that no cattle can ever

THE YOUNG KING TOLD THE WHOLE STORY

get over it," he commanded; and he added, "If the witch-woman wishes it, build it so high that the birds cannot fly over it." So it came to pass that the royal cattle no longer walked over the witch-woman's roof, the queen was no longer a golden goose, and every one in the kingdom was happy.

The people of another kingdom were happy too; for the old king and all his subjects had been in sore distress because their own dear Little Rose had been changed into a golden goose. Two only were not glad, and they were the old queen and Long Leda, for they knew that now all their wickedness would come to light. The young king told Little Rose's father the whole story that he had heard from the witch-woman, and the king at once declared that the wicked queen should be put to death. This sentence would have been carried out within three days had not Little Rose begged so earnestly for mercy that her father finally yielded.

"She shall not be put to death," he said,

"but she and her evil daughter shall be shut up together in my prison tower." This was done, and there they stayed all the rest of their lives with nothing to do but to think over their evil deeds.

The young king and Little Rose returned to their own kingdom; and the old king went with them for a long, long visit. The nightingale sang, the linden-tree played, the little prince wept neither night nor day, and both the old king, the young king, and Little Rose were as happy as the day is long.

THE GIANT'S HOUSE WITH THE ROOF OF SAUSAGES

THE GIANT'S HOUSE WITH THE ROOF OF SAUSAGES

ONCE upon a time there was a poor man who lived in a cottage, deep, deep in a forest. He had two little children, a boy and a girl, and one morning he said to them : —

"Children, you must go out to-day and cut some spruce brushwood for the fire."

The boy took an axe and started off to obey his father, and the little sister followed. They went far, far away, much farther than

they had ever gone before. They cut as much brushwood as they could carry; but when they were ready to go home, they could not find the path. Back and forth they ran with no idea which way they should go. Noon came, then evening came; and the little girl was so frightened that she sat down on a hillock and began to cry. The boy was a brave little fellow, and he tried to comfort his sister as well as he could.

"Don't cry," he said, "and I will build us a little house of spruce boughs. We will stay here all night, and in the morning when daylight comes I am sure we can find our way home again."

Then he went to work to build a little house. Soon his sister wiped her eyes and began to help him, and in a very short time they had a tiny hut of spruce boughs. They crept in through the door and lay down together; and it was not long before they had forgotten all their troubles, and were as sound asleep as if they had been in

their own little beds in their father's cottage.

When morning came, they began again to try to find the way home. They searched and searched; they wandered far and wide, but not a trace of the path could they discover. The little girl became so tired and discouraged that she threw herself on the ground and began to cry as if her heart would break. The brother tried to comfort her.

"Don't cry," he said. "The days are long, and we shall surely get home before sunset;" but the little girl sobbed and sobbed.

"I can't walk any farther," she wailed, "and I am so hungry."

Even then the brave little fellow kept up his courage. "There 's a cure for that," he said cheerily. "You stay here and rest, and I will look around and see if I can't find something to eat. Don't be afraid; I 'll come right back."

So the boy went on his way. After he

had walked a while, he came to a clearing. In the middle of the clearing was a large, low house, and smoke was coming out of the smoke-hole in the roof.

"That 's good," said the boy to himself, "for now I am sure that people live there, and perhaps they will help us."

The roof of the cottage was very high; and as the boy came nearer, he saw that it was not thatched with straw like other cottages, but with big, plump sausages.

"Oh, oh! all those sausages!" he thought. "My little sister won't die of hunger now."

There were all sorts of queer things in the forest, and the boy was too wise to trust himself in a strange house until he had found what kind of people lived in it. Therefore he climbed up on the roof and crept on softly till he had come to the place where the smoke was pouring out. Then he looked in very carefully, and, behold, there sat an old giant and his wife. The boy saw that this giant was one of the kind that eat people, and that his wife was one of the

THERE SAT AN OLD GIANT AND HIS WIFE.

worst sort of witches. Both looked fierce and cruel, and he knew well that they would much rather eat him and his sister than give them the least little bit of a sausage. There was nothing to do except to creep softly down again; but as he was creeping down, he pulled off a handful of sausages and put them into his pocket. Of course he could not help making just a little noise, and, little as it was, the giant had such great ears and such keen hearing that he noticed it. He looked up and roared out in a voice that sounded exactly like thunder: —

"Who is up there crawling over my roof?"

The boy knew that it was a matter of life or death, and he answered in a thin, piping voice: —

"It 's nobody but just a little bird."

"A bird, are you?" growled the giant. "You can't do any harm, then; but see that you clear out as fast as you can fly."

The boy jumped down to the ground and ran away to his sister as fast as his feet

would carry him. She was glad enough to see him, for she had been afraid that he would never come back. They sat down side by side and ate some of the sausages, and you can guess how good they tasted.

Two days more passed. The boy and his sister wandered about looking for a path; but no matter where they went, they always came back again to the same place, and it really began to seem as if the forest was bewitched. When they were hungry, they took a bite of the giant's sausages; but only a small bite, so that the food might last longer. Finally, however, the very last bit of the sausages was gone. It is no wonder that the little girl sat down and cried.

"There 's nothing else to do," said the boy, "but for me to go to the giant for some more food. Stay where you are, and don't be frightened. I shall come back again in no time."

He started on his way. In a little while he came to the house with the roof of sausages. Just as he had done before, he

climbed up on the roof, crept along cautiously till he came to the smoke-hole, and looked in. There sat the giant and the witch; and they looked as hideous and wicked as before. The boy knew very well that it would be of no use to ask them for help, and he began to creep down again; but, just as he had done before, he took a handful of sausages and stuffed them into his pocket. Of course he could not help making a little noise, and of course the giant heard it. Again he looked up and called out in a voice like thunder: —

"Who is up there crawling over my roof?"

The boy answered in the same thin, piping voice: —

"It 's just a wee little bird."

"A bird, are you?" growled the giant. "You can't do any harm, then, but see that you clear out as fast as you can fly."

The boy jumped down to the ground and ran away to his sister. No one could blame her for having been afraid that he would

never come back, and now she was glad enough when they sat down together again; and how good the sausages did taste!

Two days more passed. The children searched and searched for the path, but no path did they discover; and every night they found themselves back again at the same place. At last the food was gone, and again the little girl began to cry.

"It won't do any good to cry," said the boy, "but I will go to the giant's house again and get something to eat. Stay where you are, little sister, and don't be afraid."

"No, I will go with you," replied the little girl.

"You 'd better not," declared the boy. "If the giant should come out, you could not run away as fast as I."

Still the little girl persisted, and when her brother saw that she was bent upon going, he took hold of her hand and they went on together. After a while they came to the clearing, and the little girl saw the giant's house with the roof of sausages.

Then she was frightened. She dropped her brother's hand and stood still.

"Oh, let 's go back again," she whispered.

"No, indeed," replied her brother. "Now that we have come so far, we will have something to eat. We have cried and starved long enough. Come on." He took her by the hand and led her toward the house, although she pulled back and began to cry again.

"Hush, hush," he said. "You will see that there is n't so much danger as you think. You just stand

here and hold up your apron, and soon you will have plenty of food."

He crawled up on the roof and peered cautiously in. There sat the giant and his wife as before, and they did not look the least bit more handsome. The boy began to creep down carefully, but on his way he pulled off some sausages and dropped them into his sister's apron. Again the giant roared out: —

"Who is up there crawling over my roof?"

The girl trembled with fear, but the boy answered in a thin, piping voice: —

"Nothing but a little bird."

It sounded so funny that the little girl forgot her fear for a moment and laughed aloud. Then the boy was frightened, and he was angry enough at such folly. He was just about to jump from the roof and run away when his foot slipped on the round sausages. He broke through the roof and tumbled headfirst into the giant's house. When the girl saw what had happened, she was so terrified that she ran off as fast as she could without stopping to look behind her.

"A very fine little bird indeed," growled the giant. "Here, wife, take good care of this visitor of ours. He'll be a dainty roast for us some day."

The witch was ready to do that. She caught up the boy and shut him into a room to keep him till he was fat enough to eat. What to feed him on she did not know. She stood and scratched her head and thought and thought. At last she called to the boy:

"Look here! What do they give crea-

HE TUMBLED HEADFIRST INTO THE GIANT'S HOUSE.

tures like you to make them fat and tender?"

"Plenty of nuts and new milk, ma'am," the boy answered.

"Very well," declared the witch, "you shall have nuts and new milk just as much as you can eat."

She went out to get some nuts and new milk, and brought them in to the boy. "Now that we are feeding you so well you will soon be plump and tender," she said with an ugly grin that she thought was a smile.

"Nobody will go ahead of me in eating," the boy replied. "You shall have a roast that will make you smack your lips."

Every day she brought him as many nuts and as much new milk as he wished. He had a fine time; he ate as much as he liked and was as comfortable as a prince. Soon he was as fat as if he had been at home with his father and mother, and no one would ever have guessed that he was the boy who had been half starved in the forest.

After a while the giant began to long for that tender roast. He waited a day or two, and then he became so impatient that he said to his wife : —

" Is n't that young cockerel ready yet ? I want to invite our relatives to dinner before long. He must be fat enough by this time."

" I have done the best I could to fatten him," replied the witch, " but you 'd better go and see for yourself whether he is fat enough."

The giant went to the room in which the boy was kept and called : —

" I say, are you fat yet ? "

" I eat as much as I can," the boy answered, " but in this little time I can't make myself fit for a feast."

" Stick out your finger so I can see," commanded the giant.

The boy, however, was too wise to do that ; and instead of his finger, he stuck out a wooden peg that he had in his pocket. The giant pulled out his knife and began to cut the peg.

"Ugh!" he muttered. "You are as hard and bony as if you were made of wood. See here, wife," he called, "it is very stupid of you not to know how to make him more tender than this. See to it that you give him twice as many nuts and twice as much new milk as he has been having."

"The miserable little creature!" the witch whimpered. "I've been at him all the time; but he won't eat and grow fat, the rascal that he is!"

"Stuff it into him, then," roared the giant. "I can't ask folk here to eat chips."

So the old witch kept on. She brought in more nuts and more new milk, and almost choked the boy in trying to make him eat and drink. He declared that he was doing his best; and, indeed, it was not long before he became so fat that when he tried to button his jacket, it split open in the back and in the front.

By this time the giant was so eager for his fine roast that he smacked his lips every

time he thought of it. At last he demanded of his witch-wife : —

" Have n't you got that young cockerel ready yet ? I want to go this very day and ask our relatives to a feast. You ought to have him fat enough by this time."

" I have made him as fat as I could," the witch replied, " but you 'd better go and see for yourself."

The giant went to the boy's room and called again : —

" Are you fat yet ? "

" I eat just as much as I can," the boy answered, " but in this little time I can't make myself fit for a dinner."

" Stick out your finger so I can see," commanded the giant.

Instead of his finger, the boy stuck out the same wooden peg with which he had cheated the giant before. Again the giant took out his knife and began to cut the peg.

" Ugh ! " he said, " you are just as hard and bony as you were before. See here," he

called to his wife, "can't you make him fatter than this? Didn't I tell you to give him twice as many nuts and twice as much new milk as he had had before?"

"He is a miserable little scamp," cried the witch. "I am trying to feed him all the time; but it is plain enough that he won't eat and grow fat, the rascal that he is! It isn't worth while to waste any more good food on him. If you will take my advice, you will eat him as he is."

"So we will," agreed the giant. "I can't wait any longer, and I won't. I am going right off to ask our relatives to dinner. Heat up the oven and have him ready before I come back. Perhaps it wouldn't be a bad plan to put him in right away so he will be sure to be well done."

"You need not worry. I'll make him taste good, no matter how tough he is," the witch replied.

The giant went to the stable, led his horse out of the stall, put the saddle on his back, mounted, and rode away through the forest.

The witch, however, stayed at home to cook for the feast. First of all, she kindled a great fire and heated her oven hot as hot. Then she went to the boy's room and brought him out. She held him up between her thumb and forefinger and looked him over and felt of his back, his chest, and his thighs.

"You 're not so bad, after all," she said. "You 'll do very well."

"That 's where you are right, ma'am," the boy replied.

"Just think how glad my man will be when he sees you on the table so nice and tender," said the witch with another ugly grin; "but now hurry up so you 'll be done in time."

She went to the oven and opened the door. Then she took her peel, the long shovel that bakers use to put loaves of bread into the oven, and said to the boy: —

"Now jump up quick and sit down on the peel."

The boy jumped up and seated himself;

but just as the witch was about to put him into the oven, he moved so clumsily that he fell upon the floor.

"How awkward that was!" he exclaimed.

Then he seated himself again, and the witch took firm hold of the handle; but when she lifted him up, he fell off again.

"It is so hard to sit on that thing," he complained. "Please let me do it once more and I will try my very best."

He tried again; but he was as awkward as ever, and he fell upon the floor for the third time. Now the witch was angry, and she cried out:—

"What a stupid thing you are!"

"Oh, please don't be cross," the boy pleaded. "You see, I never was roasted before. I don't know how to sit on it, and there 's no one to show me."

"I will show you," grumbled the witch. She seated herself on the peel, with her back bent over and her knees drawn up to her chin.

"There! You do like this," she said.

"Yes, ma'am, I 'll do just as you did," he agreed; and in the wink of an eye he had caught hold of the handle and pushed the

witch into the red-hot oven; and before she could say "Oh!" he had shut the oven door.

He left the witch to take care of herself, and he ran away from the clearing as fast as ever he could go. Not once did he look behind him until he was far, far away. He found his little sister, and glad enough she was to see him again, for she had been afraid that the giant had eaten him. She

had kept herself alive by eating bits of the sausages that her brother had dropped into her apron from the giant's roof; but they were gone, and she had feared that she would starve.

While the children were safe and sound and far away from the house with the roof of sausages, the giant came home from giving his invitations. His wife did not come out to the yard as usual to ask what the news was, and he thought that was very strange; but he said to himself: —

"Oh, well, she is so busy about the dinner that she could n't come out this time." So he rode into the stable, dismounted, and put his horse into the stall. Then he took off the saddle and hung it up on its wooden peg. After all this was done, he went into the house. It was full of such a smell of roast meat that his mouth watered; but nothing was to be seen of his wife.

"Very likely she has gone out for wood," he thought. "I only hope the roast won't burn while she is away. How good it will

taste! I'll just peep in and see if it is as good as it smells."

He went to the oven and opened the door a little way, and, behold, there sat the witch-wife with her back bent over and her knees drawn up to her chin, and all roasted brown.

The giant was so horrified at this dreadful sight that his hair stood on end all over his head like quills on a porcupine. He slammed the oven door and ran to the boy's room to see if he was there. The room was empty, and the giant guessed in a moment what had happened. He was so enraged that he burst into pieces on the spot.

Meanwhile the boy was saying to himself, "I wonder how my giant is getting along?" At last his curiosity was too much for him, and he set out for the giant's house; but this time he would not let his sister go with him; and, indeed, she did not care to go, for she had had enough of giants on her former visit.

When the boy came to the clearing, he

could not see any sign of life in the yard. He stole up to the house and listened at the wall; but not a sound could he hear. Then he climbed up on the roof and crept along softly to the smoke-hole. He peered in cautiously, and then he saw a sight that was a sight, for there lay the horrible giant on the floor all burst into pieces.

Now there was nothing to be afraid of; so the boy clambered up to the ridgepole and took a look around to find the way out of the forest. He soon caught sight of it, and then he hurried back to his sister, who sat waiting for him with her heart in her mouth.

"Come on, little sister," he cried joyfully. "The giant and the witch are dead, and I 've found the path. Let 's go home."

The little girl caught hold of his hand, and they went on their way home, past the clearing, past the house with the roof of sausages, and far away through the forest. After a while they came to an old fence. In the fence there was a stile; and beyond

the stile there was a little cottage ; and in the cottage there was a door ; and before the door there was a rock ; and on the rock stood their father and mother, and held

out their arms. Then the children hurried through the stile and ran straight up to them. They ran so fast that I could not keep up, and so I never knew what they did afterwards.

THE SIMPLE-MINDED GIANT

THE SIMPLE-MINDED GIANT

ONCE upon a time there lived in the forest a boy whose work it was to care for a flock of goats. Every morning he drove them to a mountain; and there they clambered up and down the precipices, ate the leaves of the trees, pulled off the twigs, and gnawed the bark. The little kids bleated, and the great bucks butted their heads together till their horns cracked. Of course all this made considerable noise, and at last it awoke a giant who was asleep in his house in one of the clefts of the mountain.

Now giants like to have morning naps just as well as other people, and this one looked very cross as he sat up in bed to listen. He looked even crosser when he came out of his house and found that it was not an earthquake that had disturbed him, but only a little shepherd boy with his goats.

"I 'll catch you and I 'll punish you well for all this turmoil," growled the giant, and he set off after the boy. The little shepherd, however, was very nimble, and he succeeded in running away to another mountain and taking his goats with him. They grazed all day and the boy watched them; but he was doing something more than watch goats, for he was thinking busily and saying to himself: —

"How can I punish the giant for chasing me? How can I punish the giant for chasing me?"

At night he and his goats went home. He shut them up safely and then he went into the cottage. His mother was standing

HE SQUEEZED THE STONE UNTIL IT FLEW INTO A THOUSAND PIECES.

before the fireplace making cheese. She had just hung a kettle of milk on the crane; and when it was warm she put some rennet into it to make the curd separate from the whey. Then she took up some of the curd and made it into a little round cheese.

While she was working, the boy thought of a way in which that cheese would help him to get the better of the giant, and when it was done, he asked:—

"Mother, will you give me the cheese to take with me to the forest in the morning?"

"Of course you may have it if you wish," replied the mother.

"Then I'll take it now," said the boy. He took the cheese and laid it in the ashes and rolled it back and forth until it looked like a gray stone. His mother cried out in amazement:—

"Why, what do you mean by spoiling a good cheese in that way?"

The boy patted her arm and replied:—

"Now, mother, don't be angry with me.

Truly, the cheese isn't spoiled. I'll tell you all about it by and by." He rolled it in the ashes a few times more; then he put it into the leather pouch in which he carried his dinner and lay down to sleep.

The next morning he got up earlier than ever, slung the leather pouch over his shoulder, and went with his goats to the mountain. He did not try to keep them quiet; and in a little while the giant was wide awake and very angry. He ran out of his house and rushed toward the boy, growling and muttering and doubling up his fist.

When the boy saw his hideous red face coming nearer and nearer, he could not help wishing that he was safe in his mother's little cottage; but he kept his courage up and stood waiting.

The giant was so surprised at this that he did not strike the boy as he had intended to do, but only roared out: —

"What are you doing on my mountain?"

"You can see for yourself that I am

pasturing my goats," the boy answered. "The mountain belongs to everybody."

"Get away from here, you miserable little wretch," screeched the giant, "and if you ever come here again making such a turmoil, I 'll squeeze your bones into bits as small as these." So saying, he picked up a gray stone which lay at his feet and crushed it till it flew into a thousand pieces.

"Have n't you any more strength than that?" asked the boy. "I 'll show you how to squeeze a stone." He stooped and pretended to pick up one, though what he really did pick up was the little cheese that he had contrived to drop out of his pouch while the giant was stooping. He squeezed it, and the whey ran through his fingers and fell down upon the ground. Then he said to the giant: —

"My good fellow, if you don't get yourself out of the way and let me pasture my goats in peace, I will squeeze you just as I am squeezing this stone now, and there will be nothing left of you but a wet spot."

The giant looked at the wet spot on the ground, and his face grew white with terror. Without saying a word he turned away and hurried back into his house; and there he sat all day and all night, thinking it over and wondering at the boy's tremendous strength. The little shepherd spent a pleasant day in the forest; and when night came, he went home with his goats and told his mother what good use he had made of the little gray cheese.

The next morning he got up still earlier and went again with his goats to the giant's mountain. The giant came out, half asleep and as angry as ever. He opened his mouth wide to shout at the troublesome boy; but suddenly he remembered the wet spot, and he stood stock still with his mouth wide open.

"He looks like a hole on a post," thought the boy. He was not in the least afraid of the giant now, and he called out: —

"How are you this fine morning? Shall we try our strength again to-day?"

The giant did not especially care to try his strength, but he was ashamed to say no; so he nodded. The boy continued: —

"Let us see which of us can throw your axe so high up into the air that it will never fall down again. I don't mind giving you the first throw."

The giant threw the axe with all his might, and it went almost up to the clouds. Nevertheless, after a while they saw it coming down again.

"That was not exactly a success," declared the boy; "but don't feel badly about it. You shall have another trial, and very likely you will come out better. It is n't a hard thing to do, but perhaps you never happened to try it before."

The giant took the axe again and swung it around his head. Then he threw it up into the sky. This time it went above the clouds, but it came down at last.

"Why, I thought you were stronger than that!" said the boy, pretending to be much surprised. "You watch me, and I 'll show

you how to do it. Stand right here in front of me, and look straight up into the sky, and you can see for yourself that it will not come down." The giant took his place in front of the boy and stared up into the sky with all his might. The boy swung the axe as if he expected to give it a tremendous throw; but instead of that, he let it slip into the leather pouch that hung on his back. Then he drew a long breath as if he was quite exhausted and said: —

"There, it 's gone! I rather think you have seen your axe for the last time, but keep close watch."

The giant watched and watched, but nothing was seen of the axe. Finally the boy said: —

"I really must go to my goats, but if you have any idea that the axe will come down,

it won't trouble us any to have you stand here and watch for it."

He gave a friendly nod and went on his way. The giant gazed after him and said to himself: —

"That boy is small and slender, but he must be fearfully strong. I am not sure that I care to meet him again."

Summer passed and autumn came. By this time a new idea had entered the big head of the giant. "I 'll hire that boy for a servant," he thought. "He is so strong that he can do a great deal of work; and, then, too, I can very likely find a good chance to kill him." Therefore, the first time that the two met, the giant asked: —

"How should you like to be my servant?"

"Well, perhaps that would n't be so bad," replied the boy. "You must be very rich, and I suppose you would give me generous wages."

"If you have good sense, I 'll give you three bushels of gold," the giant declared;

"but if you are stupid and don't know enough to obey my orders, I am to have the right to cut three broad straps from your back."

"That 's fair enough," said the boy. "I 'll begin my service this very morning."

They went together into the giant's house. All around the room lay his treasures, a heap of gold in one place and a heap of silver in another; every bit of it stolen from travelers whom the giant had killed as they were passing over the mountains. There, too, was the giant's wife; and her face was even more hateful than the giant's.

"Come out and help me cut down an oak tree," said the giant to his new servant; and the boy followed him far off into the forest. When they had come to the tree, the giant asked: —

"Will you hold or chop?"

"I will hold," the boy replied.

"Catch the top of the tree then," bade the giant, "and hold it down while I chop."

"But I can't reach the top of the tree," the boy declared. "Bring it down to me and I will hold it fast enough."

The giant grasped the top of the tree, bent it down to the ground, and gave it to the boy to hold. As soon as the giant let go, however, the stout old oak sprang back to its place and threw the boy far up into the air. It was done so quickly that the master did not know what had become of his servant. He stood and wondered.

"Where has that boy gone?" he thought. "I don't like to have a servant that is n't anywhere."

Evidently if the tree was to be cut down, he would have to cut it alone; so after much grumbling he set to work. A whole hour later the boy came back. He had been thrown so far that it was a wonder he escaped with his life.

"Why did n't you stay and help me cut that tree down?" growled the giant.

"Any one could help you cut a tree," declared the boy indifferently. "I thought

you would like to see how far I can jump. Did you ever try a jump like that?"

The giant answered truly enough that he had never thought of it.

"You might think of it then when you have time," the boy said; "but meanwhile, if I do the jumping alone, it is only fair that you should do the cutting alone."

The giant could not think of any reply to make, and so he kept at work on the tree while the boy lay on the grass and rested.

When the tree was ready to be carried home, the giant said: —

"I will carry the trunk and you may carry the top."

"Oh, no," objected the boy, "you are growing old and are not so strong as you were; it is better for you to carry the top. I am young and strong, and I will see to it that the trunk comes too."

"That boy is n't so bad," thought the giant, and he lifted the top of the tree on his shoulder.

"It does not balance well," called the boy. "You must pull it farther forward."

The giant obeyed; and when the boy gave him the same direction a second time, he obeyed again. Then they set out for home. The giant thought the top of the tree was heavy, but he comforted himself by remembering that the boy, who was carrying the trunk, must be faring worse than he. After an hour's walk, however, the giant began to groan at every step, for he was indeed a very weary giant.

"Are n't you tired?" he called.

"Not the least bit," the boy answered. "Surely you don't mean that you think anything of this little piece of work?"

The giant was ashamed to say any more, and so he stumbled along until he had come to his home. Then he dropped the tree gladly enough, and again asked the boy if he was not tired.

"You don't really think that tree was heavy, do you?" exclaimed the boy. "I am not the least bit tired;" and it would

have been strange if he had been tired, for as soon as the whole weight of the tree was well balanced on the giant's shoulder, he had jumped up on the trunk and had ridden home as comfortably as possible.

After such hard work as this, the giant could not do any more that day; but when night came, he said to his new servant: —

"To-morrow morning we will have breakfast at daybreak, and then we will go out to the barn and thresh."

"I don't like to be idle so long," objected the boy. "Why not thresh the grain before breakfast? It 's only lazy folk that lie abed late in the morning."

The giant did not want to be called lazy, so he agreed. He hoped the boy would not wake; but early the next morning, long before there was any light, he felt some one trying to shake his shoulder. There was nothing to do but to get up; so he got up and the two went out to the barn. The giant fumbled around in the darkness and found two flails. One he kept for himself,

and one he gave to his servant. It was so heavy that the boy could not raise it from the floor; so he dragged it to a corner and took a great stick instead.

"Now, then, begin," he said; and every time the giant struck a blow with his enormous flail, the boy struck the floor with his stick. Of course in the darkness the giant knew nothing of this, and he kept at work steadily till daylight began to peep in through the cracks.

"Threshing does make a man hungry," said the boy. "Is n't it almost time for breakfast?"

"Yes, it is," the giant assented gladly. "Both of us have earned a full meal."

After breakfast the giant went to the cattle barn and brought out his oxen. Now the cattle barn had no door, and when the giant wanted his oxen, he simply lifted the building, led them out, and then set it back on the foundation. After the barn was in its place again, he put his head in at the door of the house and called to the boy: —

"I want my oxen put back into the barn. The dog will show you the way to it, and you can drive the cattle in where he goes. If you cannot do a little thing like that properly," he added with a horrible leer, "I am to have those three straps, you know."

"That 's a question of life or death," thought the boy; but he answered only, "It shall be done properly."

The dog ran ahead and the oxen followed. When the boy came to the barn and saw that it had no door, he guessed how the giant was accustomed to manage matters, and for a moment he wished that he was at home in his mother's cottage. Then he remembered that the giant had said, "Drive the oxen in where the dog goes," and a thought struck him. He caught a glimpse of the dog slipping in through a little hole in the foundation, and he said to himself, "The oxen shall go through that hole;" so he took the axe out of his pouch, cut them into pieces and dropped the pieces

in through the little hole. Then he went back to the giant and said: —

"That was easily done. Is there anything else that you would like?"

Never before was a giant so much taken aback. He exclaimed: —

"Have you put the oxen into the cattle barn?"

"Surely," answered the boy. "I don't mind owning that at first I did n't really know how you meant me to get them through the hole where the dog went in; but after I had cut them into pieces, they slipped in as easy as anything."

The giant was angry enough, and moreover he was beginning to be frightened, for he did not know what might be done next. He hurried in to the giantess and whispered: —

"That dreadful boy has killed all our oxen. How shall we get rid of him? You are so quickwitted, can't you plan some way?"

"Yes," answered the giantess. "Just

keep quiet till night comes and go to bed as usual. After you are sure that he is asleep, get up and strike him with that great club of yours, and I don't believe he will trouble us any more."

"Indeed, I will," declared the giant. "What a woman you are to think of things!"

As soon as it was dark, the giant and his wife went to bed, and the boy, too, went to his room. When midnight had come, the giantess whispered to the giant: —

"He must be asleep by this time. Strike hard and kill him at the first blow, or he will find some way to get the better of you."

Then the giant took his great knotty club and stole into the boy's room. He swung the club with all his might and struck the heaviest blow that he could. He heard a crash and felt something splatter up into his face. Then he went back to his wife and cried out: —

"Ha, ha! I 've given that puny little

fellow such a blow that his bones broke into bits and his blood splashed up into my face."

"What a brave giant you are!" cried his wife. "Now we shall be free from that terrible boy!" and she was so glad that she jumped out of bed and caught hold of the giant's hand, and the two danced about the room for joy.

Now they never guessed that when the giant came into the house to tell his wife about the oxen, the boy slipped in after him, hid behind the door, and heard every word that they said. As soon as it was dark he crept into the giantess's dairy and carried to his bedroom the biggest churn that he could lift. He laid it in his bed and spread the bedclothes over it. What the giant thought were the boy's bones were only the pieces of the wooden churn; and what he thought was the boy's blood was only a little buttermilk that the giantess had left in the churn. After the giant had gone back to his room, the boy lay down

and had a very good night's rest with nothing to disturb him but the dancing. At daybreak he went out to the giant and giantess and said: —

"Good morning. It's a very fine day. I hope you slept as well as I."

They were so surprised that the giant's hair fairly stood on end, and he blurted out: —

"Aren't you dead yet? I killed you with my club in the night."

The boy laughed and said: —

"What a joker you are! A flea bit me in the night, but nothing else disturbed me. What work have you for me today?"

The giant only gave a growl and went away muttering to himself, and every once in a while looking over his shoulder and shaking his head. He pondered all day long, and so did his wife; but neither of them could understand how the boy could have lived after such a blow. They agreed, however, that some way must be found to

kill him that very night, or there was no knowing what he would do.

Now the giant was not used to thinking, and long before sunset he was not only tired but very hungry. "What are we going to have for supper?" he asked his wife.

"Porridge," the giantess replied.

"That's good," said the boy. "I like porridge. Suppose we try which of us can eat most."

The giant was pleased with this suggestion. "If I can't throw up an axe so it will never come down, I can eat," he thought; "and it would be a strange thing if I could not make a little fellow like that burst himself."

They sat down to the table with a great dish of porridge before each of them, and took their spoons. Now the boy had slipped his big leather pouch in front of his stomach, and every time that he put one spoonful of porridge into his mouth, he let seven spoonfuls drop down into the pouch. After the giant had eaten seven great dishfuls, he

THERE SAT THE BOY, GOBBLING IT DOWN AS BRISKLY AS AT FIRST.

began to puff and pout and finally had to admit that he could not eat any more. And there sat the boy, gobbling it down as briskly as at first, and calling for another dish! He stopped a moment, however, to stare at the giant, and say with pretended surprise: —

"It 's very strange that you are satisfied so soon."

Then the giant, too, stared and bawled out: —

"How ever can such a puny little fellow as you eat so much without bursting?"

The boy was silent for a moment; then he said: —

"Since you have been so good as to take me into your service, and to promise me such great wages, I don't mind telling you how I do it. When I have eaten all I want, I just cut a slit in my stomach, and empty out the porridge. In that way I can go on eating as long as I like."

With these words he took out his knife, and cut a slit in his pouch so that the porridge ran down upon the floor.

"That's a fine trick!" thought the giant, and he stuck his own knife right into his great stomach. He fell down dead on the spot, and his wife was so frightened at being left alone with the terrible boy that she, too, fell down dead.

Then the boy washed his pouch, sewed it up tight, and put into it the three bushels of gold that the giant had promised him. He slung the pouch over his shoulder, and went home to his mother's cottage. You can fancy how glad she was when she saw her boy back again safely, and rich besides.

And that is where the story ends.

THE STOLEN PRINCESS

THE STOLEN PRINCESS

A POOR boy once lived with a woman who was so stingy that she would never give him half enough to eat. In the morning she gave him a little piece of bread and sent him to the forest to watch the cattle. At night he had a sup of porridge, and that was all.

This was bad enough, but one day matters were worse; for she went away very early and did not leave even the usual piece of bread. He searched all through the cupboard, but he could not find a crumb. There

was nothing to do but to set off for the forest and get along as best he could.

When noon came, he was so hungry that he threw himself on a tiny green hillock and cried bitterly. Now, no matter how hot it was elsewhere, it was always cool on this hillock, for great trees shaded it and the dew lay on the grass all day long. This time, however, the ground was dry; and when at last the boy wiped his eyes and looked around, he noticed that the grass was trampled down in a circle.

"That is strange," he thought. "I wonder who did that."

Just then his eye was caught by the glitter of something in the grass a little way off. He ran to see what it was, and, behold, it was a pair of tiny shoes made of the clearest glass. This was indeed

a curiosity, and the boy was so pleased that he almost forgot how hungry he was. All the afternoon he played with the pretty little shoes, flashing the light back and forth from one to the other, or tossing one softly away into the long grass and then finding it by its glitter.

At night, when the sun had gone behind the forest, he brought his herd together and began to drive them toward the village; but when he had gone only a few steps on the road, he met a little, little dwarf.

"Good evening," said the little dwarf.

"Good evening to you," responded the boy.

"Have you found my shoes that I lost in the grass this morning?" asked the little dwarf.

"Yes, I have," the boy answered; "but, dear sir, please let me keep them. I thought I would give them to the woman when I got home, and perhaps she would let me have a little more porridge."

The little dwarf looked sorry, but he began to beg earnestly: —

"Oh, my dear boy, please give me my glass shoes. Some time I will do as much for you, truly I will."

The little dwarf looked so piteous that the boy could not help feeling sorry for him, and at last he gave up the shoes. The dwarf was delighted. He nodded to the boy in a fashion that said, "We are good friends," and then he ran away.

The boy went on toward home. His talk with the dwarf had made him later than usual; and when he reached the house, it was beginning to be dark.

"You always loiter on the way so that I have to sit up half the night to milk," the woman cried angrily. "There's some porridge in the dish. Eat it and get yourself off to bed so you won't dawdle around so in the morning."

The boy ate the bit of porridge that was left and crept away to the hayloft. He soon fell asleep; and then he was happy, for all

PLEASE GIVE ME MY GLASS SHOES.

night long he dreamed of the tiny glass shoes, and the friendly nod of the dwarf. In the morning, however, his hard life began again, for long before the first ray of the sun had touched the tops of the trees, he heard the usual call: —

"Get up, you stupid lubber! It is broad daylight. I won't have my cattle starved because of your laziness."

The boy got up, ate his bit of bread, and drove the cattle to the pasture. At noon he went to the green hillock; but, hungry as he was, he could not help noticing that the ground was dry, and the grass was trampled down even more than on the previous day.

"I wonder whether the dwarf with the glass shoes has been here again," he thought, and looked all about him. Something which glowed bright red in the sunshine caught his eye. This proved to be an even better plaything than the shoes; for it was a little pointed red hat with tiny golden bells fastened all around the brim. While he was playing with it, and tinkling the bells one

after another, the hours passed swiftly, and almost before he knew it, the time had come to drive the cattle home. On the way he met a little, little girl, the prettiest girl that he had ever seen.

"Good evening," said the little girl.

"Good evening to you," responded the boy.

"Have you found my pointed hat that I lost in the grass this morning?" she asked.

"Yes," answered the boy; "but please let me keep it. I am so hungry, and maybe if I give it to the woman, she will let me have a little piece of bread with the porridge."

The little girl looked sorry, but she began to plead as earnestly as the dwarf had done: —

"Oh, but do please give me back my pretty red hat! I will do as much for you some day, truly I will."

"I suppose it is a pity to keep the hat," thought the boy; and he gave it to her. She was delighted. She nodded in as friendly

a fashion as the dwarf, and in a moment she had run away.

The boy hurried home; but of course he was a little late, and the woman stood ready to scold him. He ate the bit of porridge that she had left for him, and crept away to bed. In the morning he was dreaming of the little girl with the pointed red hat, when he heard the harsh voice of the woman calling: —

"Get up, you lazy creature, and go to the forest with the oxen."

"Please may I have a little piece of bread before I go?" the boy asked meekly.

"Bread!" screamed the woman. "I 've no bread for you. You 're not worth a piece of bread."

When noon came, the boy went as usual to the little green hillock, and sobbed himself to sleep. When he awoke and looked around him, he noticed that the ground was drier than ever, and that the grass was trampled in a larger circle. Suddenly he remembered hearing that sometimes on

summer nights the elves come out, and dance the dew off the grass.

"That circle must be an elf-ring," he said to himself, "and the little dwarf and the little girl must belong to the elfin folk. They seemed very kind and friendly." As he sat thinking of the elfin folk, and swinging his foot in the soft grass, it touched something that gave forth a clear, ringing sound. He stooped and picked it up, and found that it was a tiny bell. He swung it gently back and forth, and it rang so sweetly that he forgot about being hungry. The cattle, too, seemed to forget their grazing, for they all came near the little hillock, and stood around it listening.

When it was time to drive the cattle home, the boy tried to call them together; but they were not at all willing to leave the pasture. He remembered how they had listened to the little bell, and he began to swing it gently back and forth as he walked slowly towards the road. At the first sound, the bell-cow came running after him, and

the others followed her as fast as ever they could.

"That's a bell worth having," the boy thought. "The woman won't scold any more because I am not at home early; but I do hope that neither the little dwarf nor the little girl will come to claim it."

Neither dwarf nor girl appeared; but before he had gone far on the road, he met a little, little old man.

"Good evening," said the little old man.

"Good evening to you," responded the boy; but he said to himself, "I do hope he has n't lost a bell."

The next thing, however, that the old man said was: —

"Have you found my bell? I lost it in the grass this morning."

"Yes, I have," the boy replied, "but won't you please let me keep it? I can ring my cows together with it, and be sure to get home sooner. Then the woman won't scold so much, and maybe she will give me a little more to eat."

The little old man looked very sorry, but still he pleaded: —

"Dear boy, please give me back my bell. If you will, I 'll do as much for you some day."

"No," replied the boy. "I am not so stupid as you think. Day before yesterday I found a pair of glass shoes, and a little dwarf begged them away from me. Yesterday I found a pointed hat, and a little girl teased it away. Now I have found a bell, and you are trying to take that. I want it to call my cattle with, and I shan't give it up. Other people have rewards when they find things, but I get nothing at all."

Then the little old man said very seriously: —

"But I cannot live without my bell. When you take that, you take my life. I am king of the elves, but I have not the power to take the bell from you. Won't you give it to me out of sheer kindness?"

"It is rather hard for the old man," thought the boy, and he said aloud: —

"I got along without a bell yesterday, and I suppose I can to-morrow. Here it is, Sir King of the Elves; but tell your dwarf and your girl to take better care of their things;" and he turned away toward his cattle.

"Ah, but wait a minute," cried the old man. "It is no wonder you think us ungrateful; but the story is not all told. Here is another little bell that will call the cattle for you as well as the first; and you shall have with it three wishes; but think carefully before you wish."

"You are very generous," said the boy, "and I thank you most heartily. It won't take me long to name the three wishes, for I have often thought what I should like best. First, I want to be a king; second, I want to have a splendid palace; third, I want to have a beautiful princess for the queen of my splendid palace."

"H'm!" said the elfking, "that's no small matter; but elves keep their promises. Be patient for a little while, and you shall

have all three wishes at once. Now listen to me, and don't forget a word of what I say. To-night when every one is abed and asleep, you must get up and leave the house. Walk straight to the north till you come to a palace. That is all I have to say, only that you must take good care of your bell; and, wait, here is something that you will need. Take this ivory pipe, and if you want anything, blow into it softly. If you are in trouble, blow harder; and if you are in terrible danger, break the pipe, and I will come to help you."

The old man nodded kindly, and in a moment he was gone. The boy tinkled his new bell and found that it would really call the cattle as well as the old one. Then he

went home as fast as he could go. The talk with the elfking had delayed him so that it was almost dark when he came near the house. The woman was waiting, and as soon as she caught sight of him, she rushed upon him and beat the poor boy harder than she had ever beaten him before.

"It would be just right if I should drive you away from me this moment," she screamed. "You are not worth the porridge that you eat. There! there 's what you deserve, and there 's another, and another that you will never forget so long as you live."

At that moment it occurred to the boy to see what his pipe could do; but he bethought himself that on a journey there would surely be worse trouble than this, and so he made no attempt to blow it. When she had beaten him till she was tired, she said:—

"Now get yourself off to bed so that you can be up early in the morning with other folk."

The boy obeyed silently; but although he was bruised and aching from her blows, he could not help smiling at the thought of how she would look in the morning when she found that he was gone. That night he dreamed about not only the glass shoes and the red hat and the bell and the pipe, but about palaces and princesses and all sorts of difficulties and adventures. Long before sunrise he climbed down softly from the hayloft, turned toward the north, and began his journey. Without rest or sleep he hastened on. Thrice the sun rose, and twice the sun set, and he was still on his way.

On the third day, toward evening, he

came to a king's palace that was more magnificent than he had ever dreamed even a palace could be. There were long rows of windows; there were towers and marble stairways. There were wide portals, too; but the boy knew that these were for princes, and not for wanderers; and he went all around the building looking for some entrance so plain and narrow that he might venture to pass through it. At the back of the palace he came to a little door that opened on a kitchen garden. He stood looking at it for a while before he could get courage to enter. At last he went into the house and found himself in the king's great kitchen.

The head cook stood in front of the fireplace with a long white apron on, and a ladle in his hand. The kitchen maids were running in one way and another, in a great hurry to get the king's supper ready. The boy took off his cap, and said "Good evening." All the women turned around and stared at him, and the head cook came

forward and asked what he wanted. The boy made a low bow, and asked if he could perhaps find some work to do.

"That depends on what you are good for," answered the head cook.

"I can herd animals," said the boy.

"Then you have come in the very nick of time," responded the head cook, "for just now the king needs a shepherd for his sheep; but it will be the same with you as with the others, I dare say."

"And how is that?" asked the boy.

"That you will lose a sheep every day," answered the head cook.

"Indeed I will not," declared the boy earnestly. "I have been a shepherd many a day, and never have I lost a creature that was in my care."

"That is good," said the head cook. "I will talk with the chief shepherd, so you can begin early in the morning. We will see what luck you have."

The head cook did as he had promised, and the chief shepherd said "Yes" at once.

"That was a good beginning," said the boy to himself. "Kingdom and princess will come in time." He ate a good meal, and laid him down to sleep. Early in the morning he got up and drove the king's sheep to the forest. At noon he rested on a little shady green hill that was much like the one where he had found the shoes and hat and bell. It was cool and pleasant; he had a good dinner in his leather pouch; and in his pocket were the bell and the pipe.

"I wonder if the bell will call sheep as well as cattle," he said to himself. He took it from his pocket and swung it gently back and forth. Clearly it would be no trouble to get the sheep together, for at the first tinkle they came running up to him. At nightfall he found that not one was missing, and the little shepherd was so happy that he sang all the way home.

When he came near the palace, he gazed up at the windows and thought: —

"I wonder what the king would say if he saw me and knew that some time I

"THAT 'S A PRINCESS," HE THOUGHT.

should be a king too!" The king was nowhere to be seen, but at one of the windows stood a pretty little girl, younger than the boy, who was listening to his singing.

"That's a princess," he thought, and his heart beat fast, for he had never before seen a princess.

He drove his sheep to the fold, where the chief shepherd stood waiting to count them. They were all there, and the chief shepherd seemed much surprised.

"You had good luck to-day," he said, "but it may be another story to-morrow."

On the following day, however, everything went just as well. Again the boy sang all the way home, and again the little princess stood at the window and listened. So it was on the third day also, and then the chief shepherd said kindly: —

"I see that we need not watch you so closely any longer."

The fourth day went even better than the other three; for at noon, when the boy was sitting on the green hillock, he saw the

princess coming up the path, and carrying in her arms a little lamb as white as snow. She looked all around and seemed to be in search of some one. The boy sprang up, took off his cap, and made his lowest bow.

"Oh, good day," said the princess. "You are the very one I was looking for. You see, my father gave me this lamb, and I know it ought to be out with the others in the forest; but the wolves have stolen so many lambs that I did not dare to trust it. Since you came, however, they say that there is no more danger of wolves, because you watch so closely. Now I want you to take my little lamb to the forest every morning. Watch it carefully, won't you?" she begged, "so it will not come to any harm?"

The boy was so delighted and so shy that he could not speak. He took the lamb in his arms and stroked its back so gently that it was not in the least afraid, but laid its head on his wrist as if to say, "We shall be good friends."

"WATCH MY LAMB CAREFULLY, WON'T YOU?"

"You have made it trust you already," said the little princess with much pleasure. "Of course I shall want to see it every day; so when you drive the sheep home at night, wait a little while in the court. Now farewell." She gave the boy her hand, and went back to the palace.

From that day the boy's greatest pleasure was in caring for the princess's little lamb. Sometimes he carried it in his arms, sometimes it skipped along by his side; but he never let it out of his sight. Every morning he took it with him to the green forest, and every evening when he brought it home again, the princess was in the courtyard to see her pet, and tie afresh the ribbon about its neck. She never forgot to say some friendly word to the shepherd boy, and thank him because he had watched it and cared for it so well.

Thus passed several years in peace and quiet. The boy grew up, and now he was no longer a little shepherd boy, but instead a fine-looking young shepherd. The little

princess also grew up and became the most beautiful young lady ever seen. Whether people searched far or near, they could not find any one else as fair and good as she. One day a terrible calamity came to pass — the princess suddenly disappeared. The whole business of the palace was dropped, and everybody, king, queen, lords in waiting, ladies in waiting, head cook, kitchen maids, and shepherds, began to search for her. Before night they had searched through every corner of the palace, from the garret of the towers down to the lowest cellar; but not even a glimpse of the maiden did they see. The next day they searched again, but they came out no better. On the third day, and on many a day after that, they did the same; but with the same result.

At last the king concluded that the princess must have been stolen away by a giant, or a troll. If that was so, no everyday search in everyday places would be of the least use; the searchers must be men who were

ready for danger and adventure. Therefore the king commanded that there should be no more searching, and that every one should return to his business. Then he sent heralds throughout his own kingdom, and all the kingdoms round about. They were mounted on handsome horses, and they carried great trumpets. Whenever they came to any city or village, they took their stand in the market-place, and blew their trumpets three times; then three times three; then seven; then seven times seven. Of course every one knew that they were the king's heralds, and the people came in crowds to hear their message. When a great assemblage had come together, the heralds produced a royal proclamation, and read it with a loud voice. This proclamation declared that the king's only daughter had been stolen away by a giant, or a troll, and that whoever brought her back to him should have the princess for his wife, and half the kingdom for her dowry.

Such a reward as this soon filled the

palace courtyard with folk who were eager to try their luck; and every one of them was a prince or a knight. The king entertained them sumptuously. Then he gave them his fatherly blessing, and sent them on their way. Of all these brave adventurers, however, not one brought back the princess, or even any word of where she might be. The king and the queen were full of sorrow, and the whole court sorrowed with them; but the young shepherd sorrowed worst of all. He drove his flock to the pasture every morning; but now he never sang when he returned at night, for his heart was so full of grief.

One night when the shepherd lay half asleep, the little elfking suddenly appeared before him and pointed to the northward.

"To the north, to the north!" he said. "There waits your queen."

"I will have no one but the princess for my queen," thought the shepherd, "so it must be that I am the one who can find her."

In the morning, as soon as it was light, he went to the palace, and told the head cook, his first friend at court, that he wanted to speak with the king. The head cook was astonished. He said: —

"You have served here so many years that you could easily get a little rise of wages without asking the king himself. I will speak for you, if you wish."

"I thank you heartily," replied the shepherd, "but that is not what I want."

"Well, then, what is it?" asked the head cook.

"I beg your pardon most humbly," said the shepherd, "but it is a matter between the king and myself."

"Only hear that!" cried the head cook good-naturedly. "Really, you seem as important as if you belonged to the Royal House. Maybe you will tell me one of these days that Your Highness is a prince."

"Who knows?" said the shepherd. "One may sometimes become what he is not."

The head cook laughed until he was tired; but, prince or no prince, he led the shepherd up to the door of the great hall where the king sat on his throne. He was leaning his head on his hands and was grieving over his stolen daughter. The shepherd stepped forward, saluted him, and asked for his health. The king looked up and nodded kindly.

"Thank you for asking," he replied, "but nothing matters since I have lost my little girl. But how are you yourself? I hear that you are the best shepherd we have ever had."

"I thank Your Majesty," said the shepherd. "There is something that I should like to talk about with you, if only you will not take it amiss."

"Don't be troubled about that," replied the king. "You have always been a good and faithful servant, and if you want anything, speak out boldly."

"Then I will ask most humbly that I may be free for a little while," said the

shepherd, "so I can go out and try to find the princess."

When the king heard that, he was angry. He sprang up and struck the throne with his fist so that it cracked. "How dare you come here and harass an old man in this fashion, your king and lord into the bargain?" he cried. "Jesting may be a good thing, but everything has its time, and it is many a long day since I felt inclined to merriment."

"But, Your Majesty, I am not jesting," said the shepherd steadily.

"And you think you can succeed where so many knights and princes have failed?" demanded the king.

"One can but do his best," returned the shepherd. "The royal proclamation did not say whether a man's cloak must be made of prince's scarlet or shepherd's gray."

The king saw that the young man was really in earnest. Straightway his anger vanished; and as he looked into the deter-

mined face of the shepherd, he found himself feeling more hopeful than when the great company of knights and princes had set out.

"You are right, my young friend," he said. "Often there is a noble's heart under a peasant's cloak. Only bring my daughter back, and it is nothing to me whether you are shepherd or prince."

"Farewell, my king," said the shepherd. "If I do not come back with the princess, it will be because the giant or troll or whatever it may be has taken my life."

"Wait," the king cried. "You will want a horse and armor and weapons. Go to the master of the horse and tell him from me to give you whatever you need."

"I thank you," responded the shepherd, "but all I need besides what I have already is a good strong knapsack."

"As you will," agreed the king. "I shall watch for you night and day." Then he grasped the hand of the shepherd and said farewell.

The young man went to the kitchen and got a good strong knapsack. Then he went out into the courtyard, expecting to slip away without any one's knowing of his departure. He was greatly surprised to find it half full of the servants of the palace, for a page in the king's hall had told them what he meant to do.

"Look at the simpleton!" they cried. "He can herd sheep, and so he thinks he can kill giants!" They pointed their fingers at him and laughed and hooted; but he only put his hand into his pocket to make sure that his bell and his pipe were safe. Then he raised his cap and went on his way.

Straight to the north he walked, just as the elfking had told him. He passed over lonely mountains, through fertile valleys, over desert places, and through vast wildernesses. He clambered over steep rocks, and he forded swiftly flowing rivers. At last he had walked so long that he thought the end of the world could not be far away.

The ocean lay before him. A little distance from the shore was a beautiful forest-covered island, and on the island rose a palace that was far more splendid than the one from which he had come. The shore was so curving that by walking a little way he could see three sides of the palace. High up in the tower there was an open window, and in that window he saw a young girl. She saw him standing on the shore, and she waved a silken ribbon to him. Then the heart of the shepherd beat fast; he knew both the princess and the silken ribbon, for it was the very ribbon that the little lamb used to wear.

But how could he cross the sea, for the water was deep and no boat was in sight? The shepherd sat down on a stone and pondered, but he could not think of any plan. Suddenly he remembered his little pipe. He took it out, put it to his mouth, and blew it gently.

"Good evening," said a voice.

"Good evening to you," responded the

shepherd, for there before him stood the little dwarf with the glass shoes.

"What do you want?" asked the dwarf.

"Oh," cried the shepherd, "be quick and get me over to the palace."

"It shall be done," replied the dwarf. "Get up on my back."

The shepherd wondered how that could be brought about; but in an instant the dwarf became a great, great hawk. He seated himself upon its back; the hawk spread out its wings, flew through the air, and did not stop till they had crossed over to the island. There it lighted on the ground and let the shepherd get off, and then it vanished as suddenly as it had appeared.

The shepherd walked up to the palace and into the kitchen. The head cook came toward him and asked, "What is your business here?"

"I should like to find work, if there chances to be any place vacant," he replied.

"That depends upon what you can do," said the head cook.

"I can herd animals," the shepherd answered.

"Then you are come in the very nick of time," declared the head cook. "You see, this palace belongs to a giant who has such an enormous number of cows that he needs the very best shepherd in the world to herd them. He pays good wages; but if you lose a single creature, he will eat you up, hide and hair."

"That would not be really pleasant," replied the shepherd; "but I don't think he will ever grow very fat on me. Early in the morning I will be ready to begin work."

On the following day the shepherd drove the giant's cattle to the forest. They roamed about the mountain so wildly that he could never have brought them together had it not been for the little bell; but when it drew near evening he tinkled the bell, and the herd came together like so many lambs. He drove them toward the

palace; but long before it was in sight, he saw the giant coming out to meet him.

"I 'll eat you in place of the one that is missing," the giant shouted when he was yet a great way off.

The shepherd rang his little bell and all the cows stood still. The giant counted them three times both forward and backward, but whatever way he might count, he found the number just right.

"That was well done," he said. "You shall be my herdsman all your days."

Saying this he went to the seashore, loosed his magic boat, and rowed around the island three times, as he was accustomed to do at night to make sure that everything was safe.

While the giant was gone, the shepherd looked up to the tower window. There stood the princess waving her silken ribbon to him and singing softly: —

"O shepherd man, come
To-night, to-night,
When my star shines brightly down.

Come to me then,
And I will be yours,
And you shall wear my crown."

The shepherd listened to the song and understood that he was to come at night and free the princess. That night, when every one was asleep, he stole out to the tower and sang softly under the princess's window: —

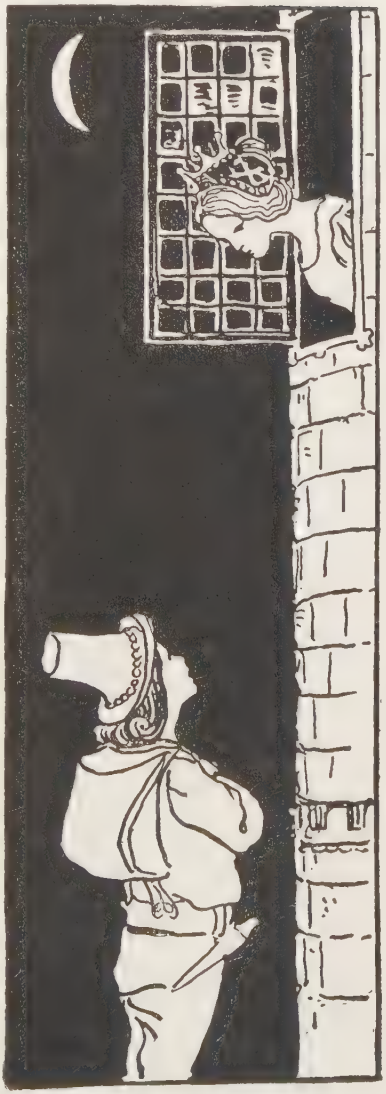
"Under your lattice the shepherd man stands,
To-night, to-night he is here;
The shadows will hide you, come down, come down;
Fair lady, fair lady, don't fear."

The princess leaned out of the window and whispered: —

"I am locked in behind an iron door and bound with a chain of gold; you must come up here and break it."

The shepherd could not think of any way to get into the tower, but he remembered his little pipe. He took it out and blew a long, long blast. It was a magic pipe, and the giant could not hear it. This time the little king of the elves appeared. As soon

as he knew what the shepherd wanted, he said, "Follow me," and they went up into the tower without the least difficulty in the world; for as soon as the elfking touched the iron door, it opened of itself; and as soon as he touched the heavy gold chain, it fell into pieces.



The princess took the shepherd's hand and all three went down the stairs and out of the tower and away to the seashore.

There the elfking stopped and sang in a gentle voice: —

"Little pike, little pike, through the waves you must go;
On your back a princess must ride,
The fairest princess in all the wide world,
With a brave young king by her side."

In an instant the little elfgirl with the pointed hat stood before them. She sprang into the sea and turned into a strong pike playing in the water.

"Now seat yourselves on the pike's back," bade the elfking; "but the princess must not be afraid, no matter what happens; for if she is, then all my power will be good for nothing."

The princess promised that she would certainly keep her courage up, and seated herself on the back of the pike with the shepherd behind her. The elfking vanished, and the pike shot out into the waves with such speed that the water roared and rushed around it.

While all this was going on, the giant lay asleep; but just as the pike set out from

the shore, he awoke and thought he heard an unusual roaring and rushing. He looked out of his window and saw that something was moving through the water and leaving a long white wake behind it. "Some one is helping the princess to escape," he said to himself, and in a moment he had taken the form of an eagle and was flying after them as fast as ever he could. In another moment he would have caught them, had not the pike heard the flapping of his wings and dived down deep into the sea. Then they would have been safe, but, alas! the princess was frightened and screamed, and in an instant the elf king's power became good for nothing. The eagle seized both the fugitives in his claws and flew back to the palace with them. Then he laid aside his eagle form and said: -

"It will be a long time before you will take me again on such a trip. In the morning, my little dear, you shall marry me; and you, my friend, shall come to the wedding and dance in your chains before you are

hanged. You will both have plenty of company later, but I shall have to leave you alone for a while." Thereupon he carried the princess to the chamber in the tower and locked the iron door with seven locks. He loaded the shepherd with chains and threw him into a dungeon fifteen fathoms under ground.

There lay the shepherd, far down in the darkness, where neither sun nor moon could give its light. "The princess will be the bride of the giant, and I shall be put to death," he said to himself sadly. Then he remembered what the elfking had told him, that if he got into any terrible distress, he should break his pipe. "Surely," he thought, "no trouble can be worse than this. If the pipe fails, there is no hope." Thereupon he took out the little pipe and broke it in two. Again the little king of the elves appeared.

"Oh, be quick and help me to free the princess and carry her back to her father!" cried the shepherd.

"It shall be done," declared the elfking. "Only follow me."

The old man led the shepherd through closed doors that flew open as they drew near and through many a splendid room. At last they came into a great hall which was full of swords, spears, axes, and various other weapons. They all gleamed and sparkled, for some were of polished steel, others of pure gold. Round about the walls stood chests full of splendid armor, and in the corner was a great fireplace. The elfking went to the fireplace and made up a fire.

"Take off those clothes," he said, and as soon as the shepherd had obeyed, the elfking caught up the sheep-herding clothes and tossed them into the fire, where they were soon burnt up. Then he went to a strong iron chest and took from it a costly coat of mail which shone with the purest gold.

"Make ready," he said.

Again the shepherd obeyed, and soon he was in full armor from head to foot. Then

the elfking took a sword from the wall and buckled it to the shepherd's side. "There are other swords as sharp as this," he said, "but it was decreed from the beginning that this one and no other should be the death of the giant."

The shepherd was not used to armor, but he moved as easily as though he had been a prince and worn a coat of mail all his life. They went again through the many splendid rooms and the closed doors, and so returned to the gloomy dungeon fifteen fathoms under ground.

"Do you want anything more?" asked the elfking.

"No, only to thank you for your friendly aid," answered the shepherd; "and if we do not meet again, give your dwarf and your girl kindly greeting from me."

"Farewell and good luck to you," said the elfking, and in a moment he was gone.

Again the shepherd was alone deep underground where neither sun nor moon could give its light; but he was no longer sorrow-

ful; he was only impatient for the time to come when he should be taken up to the wedding hall.

With the princess matters were much worse; for now that the young shepherd was in the hands of the giant, she had not the least hope of escaping the dreadful fate of being the bride of the horrible monster. When the witch-women came to dress her for the wedding, she begged them to kill her with a sword or throw her into the sea; but they only laughed and put a golden crown on her head and loaded her slender fingers with great rings of red, red gold. They put bracelets on her arms and a necklace about her neck, and they led her down to the wedding hall and placed her at the table in the seat of honor beside the giant. Then came the wedding feast. The giants and giantesses ate and drank enormously and had a very gay time; but the princess sat and cried and said to herself: —

"How happy I might have been if I only had not let myself be afraid!"

When evening came, the courtyard was lighted up with mighty torches, every one as big as a pine tree. The giant and his guests trooped down merrily to see the shepherd dance in his chains, and the poor little princess was made to go with them.

"Go down to the dungeon and bring up the prisoner," commanded the giant. The servants took their torches and scrambled down into the dungeon; but instead of a shepherd, behold, there stood a splendid young knight with sword and shield and flashing armor. They were so badly frightened that they dropped their torches; and they made their way through the dark passages up to the courtyard as fast as they could scramble, for the fierce young knight was at their heels.

Now the eyes of the giant were so sharp that they could see straight through the glittering armor.

"Huh! it 's nothing but the shepherd in a bit of mail," he said scornfully.

"Shepherd or not, you are to come out

here and fight for the princess," cried the prisoner; and he drew his sword. It flashed like fire; and at the first sight of it the giant turned pale and fell to the ground, for he had heard of the burning sword, and knew that it was to be his death. Before he could rise, the shepherd sprang forward and gave such a stalwart blow that the giant's head rolled off and went dancing away down the hillside. When the wedding guests saw this, they trembled with fear, and every one scampered to his own home as fast as he could go without daring to give even one look behind him.

The princess and the shepherd were left alone in the great courtyard. They went down to the seashore, loosed the giant's magic boat, and rowed away from the island. Before long, they were at the king's court; and never was a court so glad before. Every one wanted to see the brave man who had rescued the princess. When he went away, people had pointed their fingers at him and cried, "Look at the simpleton!" but now

they pointed and whispered, "See the brave man who killed the giant and set the princess free!"

Of course there was a most splendid wedding when the shepherd married the princess, and for her dowry the king gave him half the kingdom. After the king died, the shepherd ruled the whole kingdom. He was now very rich, but the little bell and the broken pipe were his most precious possessions. For many centuries they were kept in the treasure room of the palace; and if they had not been lost only a very little while ago, they would be found there to-day.

THE BLACK BOX AND THE RED

THE BLACK BOX AND THE RED

THERE was once a widow who was so cross and disagreeable that every one disliked her. When people saw her coming toward them, they would often leave the road and go a long way about through the fields rather than meet her, for they knew she would pick a quarrel with them if she possibly could. The widow married again, and her second husband was the most kindhearted man in the world. No matter how hateful she was, he would never say anything cross to her; but the wicked woman made his

life so unhappy that he was glad when the time came for him to lie down and die.

Now the widow had a daughter who was as cross and as disagreeable as her mother; and the husband, who had been a widower, had also a daughter who was as kindhearted and gentle as her father. Of course every one disliked the woman's daughter and loved the man's daughter. The woman and her hateful child were angry and jealous, and for a long time they tried to find some way of getting rid of the poor girl. How to do it was a hard question, for she always obeyed her stepmother so promptly and did her tasks so well that it was not easy to find any excuse for giving her even the smallest punishment, much more for sending her away.

The woman puzzled her head by night and by day; and at last she hit upon a plan. She called the two girls to come out into the yard with their spinning wheels. Then she said: —

"You are both to sit down by the well

and spin. Your thread must be fine and even; but see to it that it does not break, for the one whose thread breaks first shall be punished; I shall throw her into the well."

The girls sat down to their wheels and began to spin, as their mother had bidden. She had not dealt fairly with them, however, for to her own daughter she had given the best and strongest flax, but to her stepdaughter she had given the poorest kind of tow; and of this the girl was expected to spin a fine, even thread!

The little stepdaughter did her very best; but of course it all came out just as one would have expected and just as the wicked woman had planned; for tow is tow, and no carefulness can make it into flax; and it was not long before her thread broke.

The woman had been standing close beside the girl's wheel; and the moment that the thread snapped, she seized the girl by her shoulder, and, though the child begged and pleaded for mercy, the hardhearted woman

pushed her headfirst into the well. Then mother and daughter went back into the house; and a merry day they had, for at last they were rid of the one whom they hated.

But matters did not go on exactly as they had expected. When the little girl was thrown into the well, she sank down through the water, to be sure, but she was not drowned; and when she came to the bottom, the ground opened under her. She looked up and found herself in a beautiful Underworld meadow. Of course the sun did not shine there as in the upper world; but yet the grass was so green and the trees were so leafy that it was a very lovely place. One thing was exceedingly strange; it was that, although she had fallen down through the water, her dress was not the least bit wet. She felt puzzled, and she was lonesome too, for she was all alone in a wide new world. There was no one to tell her what to do, and it is no wonder that her eyes were wet even if her dress was not.

"Oh, what shall I do? Where shall I go?" she thought. "I don't dare to try to go back to my stepmother, and I can't stay here alone. I 'll go on a little way through the meadow and see if I can find a place to stay."

She wiped her eyes and went on through the meadow. Soon she came to a fence so old and mouldering that the withes were almost falling from the stakes and the crumbling rails were overgrown with long gray moss.

When the fence found that the girl meant to climb over, it was alarmed; for it was so weak that it was afraid of falling to pieces. "My dear little maiden," it said, "please don't harm me. I am old and mouldering. If you wish to go this way, please don't break me when you climb over, but step as lightly as you can."

"Indeed I will," the little girl replied. "Don't be afraid, for I won't do the least bit of harm."

She climbed upon a rock beside the fence.

Then she took one little step upon the rail and jumped down on the other side; and she stepped so lightly and carefully that nothing was broken or even pushed out of its place; not even a bit of bark fell to the ground. Then she went on through the meadow. The fence gave her a friendly look and fluttered its gray moss.

"That's a rare maiden," it said. "Keep on, little one, as you are doing, and everything in the world will go well with you."

A little farther on the girl came to a baker's oven which stood near the path. It was full of warm, newly baked bread, every loaf of which was whiter than the others. The oven was afraid that she would carry away so much bread as to leave it empty, and it began to plead.

"My dear little maiden," it said, "please don't harm me. I am only a helpless oven. If you are hungry, eat as much as you wish, but please don't carry any away with you. Push in what is left, and may good fortune go with you."

"PLEASE DON'T BREAK ME," SAID THE FENCE.

"Indeed I will," the little girl replied. "Don't be afraid, for I won't do any harm."

The baker's shovel stood close beside the oven. The girl opened the oven door; then she took up the shovel, brought out a newly baked loaf and began to eat. After

she had eaten as much as she wished, she put back what was left, shut the oven door, and laid the shovel back in its place. Then she went on through the meadow. The oven gave her a friendly look, for it felt warm and grateful.

"That 's a rare maiden," it said. "Keep on, little one, as you are doing, and everything in the world will go well with you."

It was not long before the girl came to a cow that was grazing in the meadow. On one of the cow's horns hung a milkpail, and her bag was so full that any one could see how much she needed to be milked. She wished that the girl would milk her; but she was afraid that the milk would be thrown away and the pail not put back in its place.

"My dear little maiden," the cow said, "please don't harm me. I am only a poor cow. If you are thirsty, milk me and drink all that you wish; but please don't spill any on the ground. Throw over my hoofs what is left and hang the pail on my horns again."

"Indeed I will," the little girl replied. "Don't be afraid, for I won't do any harm."

She took the pail from the horn and seated herself to milk. After she had milked, she drank as much as she wanted.

She poured over the hoofs of the cow all that was left, just as she had been asked, and hung the pail on the horn again. Then she went on through the meadow. The cow looked after her kindly and gave a long, friendly moo.

"That 's a rare maiden," she said. "Keep on, little one, as you are doing, and everything in the world will go well with you."

The girl had not yet reached the end of the meadow, so she went on still farther. After a while she came to an apple-tree standing beside the path. It was a large tree and bore very fine fruit; but it was so loaded with apples that the boughs dragged on the ground. The tree wished that she would pick some of the apples and eat them; but it fairly shook with fear lest she should pick them all or should bite one after another and throw them away.

"My dear little maiden," it said, "please don't harm me. I am only a poor apple-tree. Pick and eat as many apples as you wish; but please don't throw any away or

carry any with you. Be kind to me and bury what are left close to my roots."

"Indeed I will," the little girl replied. "Don't be afraid, for I won't do any harm." She picked some of the ripe apples, but she was careful to leave the green ones on the tree. She ate as many as she wished and buried at the root of the tree those that were left, and she put props under the heavy branches to keep them from breaking. Then she went on through the meadow. The tree gave her a friendly look and nodded kindly with its green leaves all rustling.

"That 's a rare maiden," it said. "Keep on, little one, as you are doing, and everything in the world will go well with you."

So the day passed. When it was almost evening, the girl came to a gate. Beside the gate sat an old, old woman leaning against the post, and the girl dropped a curtsy prettily, saying, "Good evening, lady."

The old woman was pleased, and responded: —

"Good evening to you. Who are you

that greet a poor old woman like me so prettily ? "

" I am only a poor wanderer," the girl replied. " I cannot stay at home any longer ; and I am looking for a place to go out to service."

" If that 's the case," said the old woman, " then there 's nothing to hinder you from sitting down here with me and combing my hair for an hour while we have a little talk."

" Surely," replied the girl, " it won't hurt me to do you so small a favor as that."

She knelt down on the grass close beside the old woman, and combed and combed until her head looked as trim as if it had been on a Sunday morning. The old woman said : —

" You are a kindhearted little girl, for you do not think yourself too fine to comb a poor old woman's hair. Now I can do something for you. I can tell you of a good place to find service. Go right on till you come to the end of the meadow, and then

BESIDE THE GATE SAT AN OLD, OLD WOMAN.

you will see a large, handsome house. A rich woman lives there, and if you ask to be a dairymaid, I can promise you that she will not say no. There are cows and cats and sparrows and other creatures on the place; but you will know how to treat them. Farewell, my child. You are a rare little maiden, and if you keep on as you have begun, everything in the world will go well with you."

The girl courtesied prettily and said farewell, and then she went on her way. At the end of the meadow lay a great, great house just as the old woman had said. She went in and asked shyly if she might stay there and be a dairymaid.

"Yes, you may stay," answered the rich woman, "and your work may begin to-morrow."

On the following day the sun had hardly risen before the girl was up and ready to do her morning work. First of all, she went to the cattle barn. Now some maids scream and shout at the cattle and scold them;

but this maid did nothing of the sort. She patted the cows on their backs and said to them gently: —

"My poor little cows, how hungry you must be! Wait a minute and you shall have something to eat."

She brought hay for their breakfast and straw to spread in their stalls, and made them comfortable. Then she took the milking stool and set herself down to milk. She had been so gentle with them that they were just as gentle with her. Not one of them kicked the pail or did the least thing to annoy her; but they all stood as quiet as lambs, and when she was done, they lowed softly and happily.

The little girl strained the milk and poured it into the pans. Then came a great company of cats, large cats, small cats, and middle-sized cats, and they ranged themselves around her and looked up into her face. They curved their tails and rubbed their heads against her and mewed eagerly: —

"Give us a little milk. Please give us a little milk."

The girl was just as kind to the cats as she had been to the cows. She did not push them away or strike them, as many other girls would have done; but she stroked their backs and said to them kindly: —

"My poor little pussies, I know you are hungry and thirsty. Just wait a minute and I will give you something good to drink."

The cats' basin stood on the floor, and she filled it with milk to the very brim. They ate what they wanted, and then they gathered around the girl and arched their backs and purred, and showed in every way that they could how grateful they were to the new little dairymaid.

This was the work of the early morning. The next thing to do was to go to the barn and sift the grain. While she stood and sifted, a whole flock of sparrows came into the yard, for they, too, wanted their breakfast. They hopped nearer and nearer to the

barn door, and at last they perched on the threshold. They looked straight at the girl, turned their tiny heads to one side and to the other and chirped : —

" Give us a little grain. Please give us a little grain."

Some girls would have cried, " Get away, get away ! " but this girl did no such thing. She beckoned to them and said kindly : —

" My poor little sparrows, what a hard time you are having ! I know you are hungry, and if you will wait just a minute, I will give you something to eat."

She took a handful of grain from the heap and scattered it on the ground. The sparrows began to hop all about her and pick it up. They fluttered their wings and chirped, and seemed to be trying to thank her for being so kind to them.

The days that followed were much like this one. Whatever the girl undertook she did well. The cows throve under her care and gave more milk than ever before. They were so gentle and so fat that there had

never before been such beautiful creatures on the place.

One morning a message came to the girl

that her mistress wished to see her. She went to the house and asked what there was that she could do.

"I have seen," the woman said, "that you take good care of the cows and that all your

work is so well done that I can feel at ease about it. I want to see whether there is any other kind of work that you can do. Here is a little sieve. Now go to the fountain and bring this home full of water. Don't spill a single drop by the way. This is your first test."

"What a strange thing to ask!" thought the girl; but she took the sieve and went to the spring to obey her mistress. She began to pour water into the sieve; but of course it ran out as fast as she could pour it in. She tried again and again, and at last she was so discouraged that she sat down under a willow and began to cry. Just then she heard a great fluttering over her head. She looked up, and there was the whole flock of sparrows alighting on the willow branches. Every little bird was twittering and chirping with all its might, each one louder than the others. This is what they chirped: —

"Sieves and ashes,
They will hold;
Sieves and ashes, —
Now we 've told."

The girl wondered what all this could mean; but pretty soon it flashed into her mind that if she should sprinkle ashes on the bottom of the sieve, they would fill up the little holes and then the water would not run out. She hurried to get some ashes, and then she spread them over the bottom of the sieve. The sparrows were right; for, behold, when she poured the water in, it did not run out, and she could carry the sieve without spilling a single drop. She was delighted, and the sparrows seemed as happy as she. They flew away chirping merrily; while the little girl went back to the house, carrying the sieve carefully before her.

When her mistress looked into the sieve and saw that it was full of water, she was very much surprised. "Why, who told you how to do that?" she asked. "I should never have thought that you would be such a skillful water carrier."

The little girl went on with her usual work; but some time after this a message came to her again that her mistress wished

"WHY, WHO TOLD YOU HOW TO DO THAT?"

to see her. She went to the house and asked what there was that she could do.

"The last time that we talked together," the woman replied, "I found not only that you could tend cattle but also that you were a skillful water carrier. Now I am going to test you once more to see whether there is any other kind of work that you can do. Here are two skeins of yarn, one black and the other white. Go down to the river and wash the black one till it is white as snow; then wash the white one till it is black as a coal. It must be done before sunset. This is your second test."

"That is a very strange command," thought the girl. "Perhaps I could wash the black one white, but how could I ever wash the white one black?" Nevertheless the mistress had said it must be done, and so she went down to the river to try. She washed and washed; but do the best she could, the black yarn was still black and the white yarn was still white. She sat down under a birch-tree that grew near the bank,

and she wept bitterly. Suddenly she heard what sounded like the fluttering of many wings over her head. She looked up, and, behold, it was her little sparrows again, the

whole flock of them. They alighted on the birch-tree, and every little bird began to twitter and chirp as loud as his tiny throat would let him: —

"Take the black;
Turn east, not west.
East, not west,
That way is best."

"What can it mean?" thought the little girl; but in a minute she understood. The friendly little birds were trying to tell her to carry the black yarn to the east, up the river, and wash it there; so she took the black yarn and ran happily along the bank for a little way until she came to a large flat stone close to the water. She knelt down on the stone and dipped the yarn into the stream. She did not have to wash it at all, for when she took it out, it was as white as the whitest snow.

Now the black yarn was white, and that was half of her task; but to wash the white yarn black seemed no easier than at first; and she would never have been able to do it if the little sparrows had not been waiting to help her again. They flew down from the tree and fluttered their tiny wings close to her ears, as if they were afraid she would

not understand what they wanted to tell her. Every little bird chirped as loud as ever he could, and this is what they said: —

"Take the white
And seek the west.
Seek the west,
That way is best."

The girl guessed in a moment what they meant. She took the white yarn and went down stream a little way until she came to another great flat stone lying close to the river's edge. She knelt on the stone to wash the white yarn; but it had hardly touched the water before it became blacker than the blackest coal. The sparrows chirped joyfully and flew away.

The little girl was now the happiest child in the whole Underworld. She took the white yarn in her right hand and the black in her left and ran back to the house almost as fast as the sparrows had flown. The mistress looked at the yarn very closely, first at one skein and then at the other, to make sure that the black had once been white and

that the white had once been black. She was very much surprised, and she cried: —

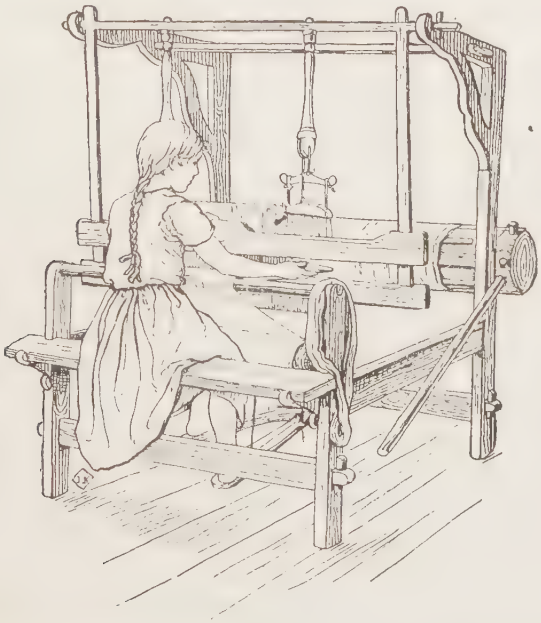
"I never should have believed that you knew so much about washing."

Day after day passed, and one beautiful morning a message came to the girl for the third time that the mistress wished to see her. She went to the house and asked what there was that she could do.

"The last time that we talked together," said the mistress, "I found that you could not only take care of cows and carry water, but that you could also wash yarn. Now I am going to give you a new test. I want to see whether there is anything more that you know how to do. Here are the two skeins of yarn that you washed. Take them to the loom and weave them into cloth. There must not be a break or a knot in it, and it must be done before sunset. This is your third and last test."

It was no wonder that the poor girl was amazed at the thought of weaving a whole web in one day, but she took the yarn and

went to the weaving room. She wound the threads of the warp on the warping beam. She drew them carefully through the harness and through the reed. She filled the



quills and put one into the shuttle. Then she sat down on the wooden seat and began to weave as fast as she could. She did not stop to eat or to drink ; but yet the weaving went on very slowly, for the yarn was so tender and uneven that it was constantly

breaking. She did her very best, but she could not make the yarn hold; and the longer she wove, the worse it became. At last she stopped. She hid her face in her hands and wept bitterly. Just then she heard a little scratching at the door.

"Poor little pussies," she said, "you need not stay out there and be lonely just because I do not know how to do my work well."

She jumped down from the loom and opened the door. The cats slipped in, one after another. They rubbed themselves against her and showed as plainly as they could how glad they were to see her. When they found that she had been crying, they mewed: —

"What makes you so sad, little friend? What makes you so sad?"

She answered: —

"Little pussies, I have good reason to be sad, for my mistress told me to weave a web and to see to it that it was done before sunset. The thread is so tender that it is

constantly breaking, and I shall never be able to finish the work in time."

Then the cats mewed: —

"If it is nothing worse than that, we know what to do. You have been so kind that we are very glad to do a little something for you. Now do you sit down to the quilling wheel and fill the quills for us, and the whole thing will go off like a dance."

With this, all the cats jumped up on the loom and began to weave; and, sure enough, the work did go off like a dance. One moved the treadles, another threw the shuttle, the third struck it back, the fourth mended whenever a thread broke, the fifth stretched the cloth, the sixth rolled it up; each one did some part of the work. The girl herself sat at the quilling wheel and wound quills as fast as she could; but the cats worked so quickly that it was all she could do to keep up with them. It was not long before the web was done; and it was all so close and smooth and fine that the

sharpest eyes in the world could not have found a knot in it.

Then the girl was glad indeed. She took the cloth from the loom, folded it as neatly as she could, and started for the house. The cats were so happy that they purred louder than ever cats purred before, and they ran away still purring.

When the girl came into the house, the mistress took the cloth and looked at it very closely, first on one side and then on the other; but there was not a break or a knot to be found. "The child can never have done this alone," she said to herself. "Who in the world could have helped her?" but to the girl she said only, "I should never have thought that you could weave so well."

The weaving was the last of the three tests, and now she had borne every one. The cows and the cats and the sparrows were all her friends; the mistress never found any fault with her work; and the days slipped away so quietly and happily that before she knew it, one year, the usual

time of a learner's service, had come to an end. She was happy in her work, but she could not help longing to see her old home. She had not forgotten the unkindness of her stepmother and her stepsister; but she said to herself, "It may be that they are sorry now, and perhaps they will let me come into my home again." At last she could not bear the longing, and so she went to her mistress and asked if she might go away.

"Surely," replied the mistress. "You have served out your time, and I have no right to keep you any longer if you wish to go. I should be glad if you were willing to stay with me, for you have done well everything that you have undertaken; but you are free to go whenever you please. There is one thing that we must talk about first, and that is your wages. I suppose you thought that you were here merely as an apprentice; but you have served me well and you shall be well paid. Now go upstairs to the attic, and there you will see a number

of boxes. Choose whichever one of them you please, but do not open it until it is in the place where you mean to keep it. If you open it before, you will find nothing in it."

The girl thanked her mistress and went upstairs to the attic. She was not alone, for the cats knew all about the boxes, and the whole company of pussies, white, black, yellow, and gray, scampered up the stairs after her. When she had come to the attic, there stood the boxes just as the mistress had said. Some were large, some were small, and they were of all colors, one red, one yellow, one blue, and one green. They were so handsome that she hesitated to take any one of them, for she thought that even the plainest would be more than she had earned. Suddenly she caught sight of a little black box standing alone in the farthest corner.

"I am sure this is as much as I ought to have," she said aloud.

Then the cats all began to purr. They crooked their tails and rubbed against her and mewed: —

"Take the black,
Don't take the bright one;
Take the black,
That is the right one."

"Yes, I think so too," said the girl. "It will pay me well for my work."

She took the little black box under her arm and went downstairs. "I thank you from my heart for all your kindness," she said to the mistress, "and I hope nothing but good will ever come to you." Then the mistress said farewell, and the girl went out to the yard to say her good-by to the animals. She patted the cows, she shook the right forepaw of every one of the cats, she scattered grain for the sparrows; and at last she went away leaving them all heartily sorry to see her go.

When she had walked a little way, she came again to the great meadow. She went through the gate, by the apple-tree, by the cow, by the bake-oven, and over the fence. She picked a ripe apple from the tree, she took a drink of milk from the cow, she ate

a bit of bread from the oven, and when she came to the fence, she stepped over it as lightly as she had done before. At last she was at the place where she had come down. The ground over her head opened. She did not know just how it came about, but somehow she went up through the well to the upper world again; and when she looked around, she found that she was standing by the well curb. She had come through the water, but she was not the least bit wet; and under her arm was the little black box. Not far from the well was her home, the house in which she was born. She was so happy to see it again that she ran up to the door and pushed it open and cried joyfully: —

"Oh, mother, how do you do? I am so glad to see you."

The woman and her daughter were not glad, however. At first the stepmother was too angry to speak, but in a moment she screamed: —

"You hateful creature, what are you here

for? I thought you were dead; but there's no such good luck. Where have you been all this time?"

"I have been down in the Underworld," the girl answered. "I have been a dairy-maid. This morning I came away from my mistress, and she gave me this little black box for my year's wages. Dear mother, won't you please give me just a little place to put it in?"

Then the woman was so angry that she was almost beside herself. She caught the girl by the arm and pushed her out of the door.

"So you think, do you, that I will give you room in my house for yourself and your worthless rubbish? Get away into the hen-house, you wretched little beggar!"

The poor little girl turned away without a word and went into the henhouse. She cleaned it in every corner and rubbed it until it shone, and made it as dainty as the room of the finest lady in the land. When everything was in order, she chose a place

for her little box, and there she set it. Of course all this time she had wished and wished to know what was in the box, but she had obeyed her mistress and had not opened it. Now she put the key into the keyhole, turned it around, and then lifted the cover very carefully. What did she find? She found gold and silver; she found pearls and precious stones; she found necklaces and girdles all ablaze with jewels; she found bracelets and rings, and more beautiful things than any one ever saw in one box before. They gleamed and glittered and flashed; and in the twinkling of an eye the walls and the very ridgepole were all ablaze with their light. The henhouse was much more splendid than the most magnificent palace that was ever seen, and such a brilliant light shone out of every little crevice that people said to one another, "Really, it looks as if the sun itself was in that house."

Throughout the land the story spread of the girl and the wonderful henhouse, and thousands came to gaze upon her and upon

the glittering, flashing light. Among those who gazed longest were the stepmother and her daughter. They stared until their eyes began to ache; and the more they stared, the more envious they became. At last they could hardly eat or sleep. One night when the woman was lying awake she said to herself: —

"The wretched little thing! I can't see what there is so wonderful about her. She is exactly like a cat, I know that, for, throw her where you will, she lands upon her feet. I thought I had seen the last of her, but here she is again, and it was just my pushing her into the well that gave her the good fortune! I only wish I had pushed my own daughter in."

For a whole hour longer she lay and thought. At last she made up her mind what to do.

"I will certainly do it," she said to herself. "If things went so well for that little wretch, no one can say what good fortune will come to my daughter. She will have a

finer box and more splendid jewels, I am sure of that."

The next morning, as soon as it was light, she called her daughter into the yard and told her to sit beside the well and spin. "The thread must be fine," she said, "and if you let it break, I shall throw you into the well for a punishment."

The girl did not dare to disobey; so she brought her spinning wheel, seated herself by the well, and began to spin. This time, however, she did not have the very best and strongest flax as before, but rather the poorest and tenderest of tow; and she had hardly begun to turn the wheel before the thread broke. Then her mother threw her headfirst into the well.

She sank down through the water just as her sister had sunk, and came to the bottom of the well. The ground opened under her feet, and in a moment she, too, was in the Underworld meadow. Then she guessed why her mother had thrown her into the well. "I know all about this," she said to

herself, "and I rather think I can manage better than that good-natured simpleton. No one shall step on my toes, I know that," and she set out boldly through the meadow.

After she had gone a little way, she came

to the old fence, and it pleaded as it had done before: —

"My dear little maiden, please don't harm me. I am old and crumbling. If you wish to go this way, please don't break me when

you climb over, but step as lightly as you can."

"How dare you call me *your* little maiden, you rotten wretch!" screamed the girl angrily. "Just wait and you 'll see what you 'll see."

Then she pulled up the stakes, tore off the withes, broke the mouldering rails in two, and threw the fragments as far as she could. She strode on haughtily over the ruin with her head high in the air. The fence looked at her and shook its gray moss.

"What a girl that is!" it said angrily; and it called after her, "Keep on behaving in this way, and you will see how the world will go with you."

A little farther on the girl came to the baker's oven, and it cried, just as it had done before: —

"My dear little maiden, please don't harm me. If you are hungry, eat as much as you wish, but please don't carry any away with you. Push in what 's left, and may good fortune go with you."

"How dare you call me *your* little maiden, you old hollow thing!" the girl screamed. "You need n't think that I shall take orders from you, you stupid hole. Just wait and you 'll see what you 'll see."

Then she opened the oven door and dragged out every loaf. She took one bite out of each one and threw what was left on the ground. She stamped on the loaves and kicked them; then she took the shovel and threw the fragments as far as she could. The oven door she left wide open; and after doing all this mischief, she strode haughtily away with her head high in the air.

The oven fairly hissed with rage. "What a girl that is!" it said angrily; and it called after her, "Keep on in this way, and you 'll see how the world will go with you."

As it had been with the fence and the oven, so it was with the cow and the apple-tree; for when she came to the cow, she drank what milk she wanted, then she threw

the rest away and broke the pail into pieces. When she came to the apple-tree, she climbed into its branches and shook off every apple, ripe or unripe. She took one bite out of as many as she could, threw away what was left, and broke off leaves and twigs and even branches.

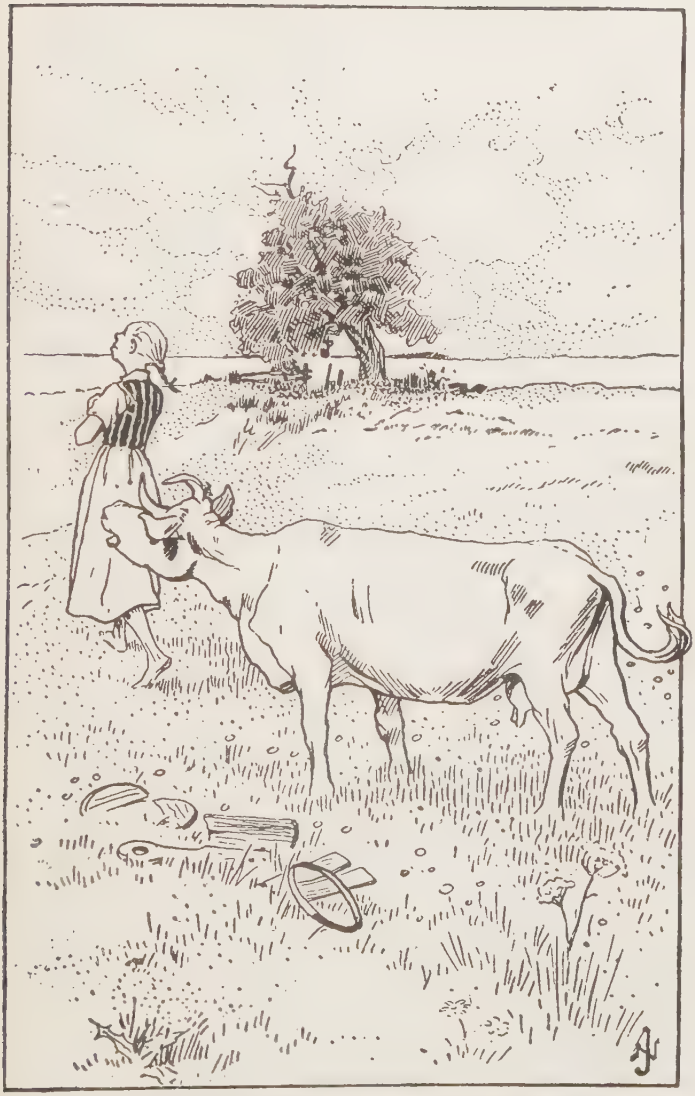
At the gate the same old, old woman was sitting who had been there the year before; but the girl went on without a word of greeting.

"What kind of girl are you, my little maiden," said the woman, "that you do not say good morning to old people?"

"I 'm not *your* little maiden, you ugly old witch," cried the girl, making a face. "I have better business than to greet old hags like you, and I shan't be scolded by you either."

"And what is the business that you are so eager about?" the woman asked.

"It 's none of your affairs," retorted the girl, "but I 'm going to get me a fine place at service. Now you know."



SHE THREW THE REST OF THE MILK AWAY AND BROKE THE PAIL INTO PIECES.

"Things will be as they will be," said the woman; "but at any rate you will have time enough to sit with me a little while and comb my hair. If you wish I will tell you how to find a place."

"Comb your hair!" exclaimed the girl. "Well, that would be fine! No, thank you," and she slammed the gate so that every splinter of it shook. She made up a face again and ran out her tongue at the woman, and then strode on across the meadow.

At last she came to a large house where she was sure the rich woman lived. She asked to see the mistress, and said she wanted to find service.

"She does not look very pleasant," thought the mistress, "but perhaps she may be a good dairymaid;" so she said to the girl, "Yes, I need help in the dairy, and I will take you." The girl was not pleased at having to do a dairymaid's work; but she said to herself, "The woman won't catch me doing much work, but when we talk about wages, then I'll have something to say."

So now the girl had become a dairymaid at the great house, just as her stepsister had done; but she was a very different sort of dairymaid. She never patted the cows or spoke kindly to them. She hurried them into the barn; she struck them and scolded them and tormented them in every way that she could. She seldom fed them at the proper time; sometimes she forgot to give them food and sometimes she forgot to give them drink. Of course she had trouble with them, for when she tried to milk them, they were afraid of her, and they often kicked the pail over. After a while they became poor and thin and gave hardly any milk. There had never been such miserable cows and so little milk on the place.

The cats too had a hard time with the new dairymaid. After she had milked the cows and poured what milk there was into the pans, the cats came running up and mewed: —

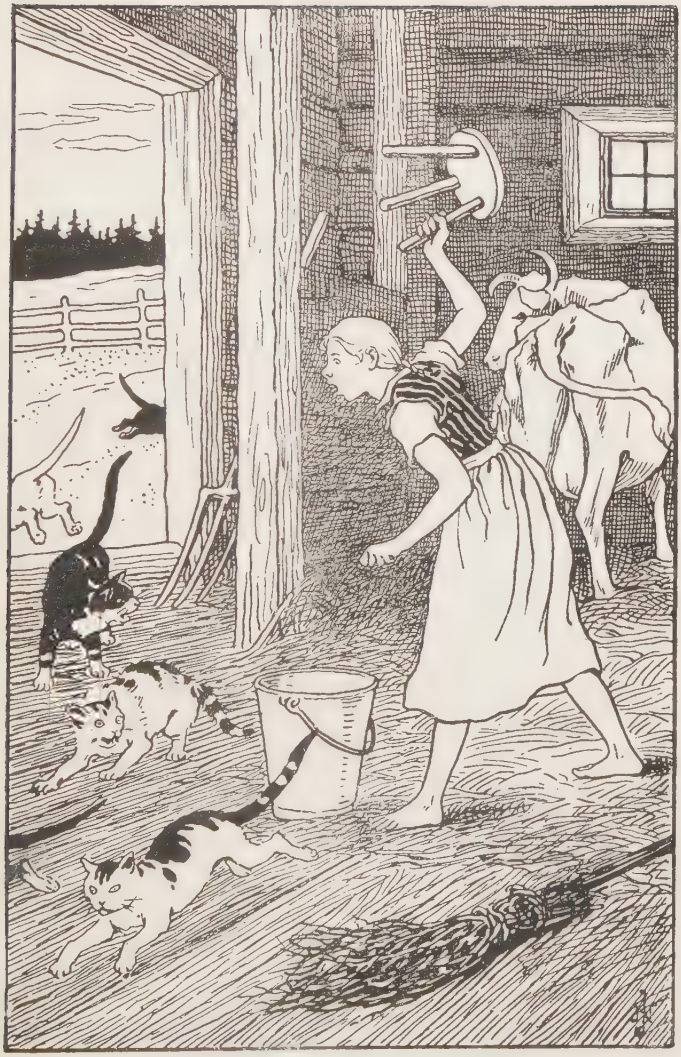
"Give us a little milk, please give us a little milk."

This girl was not like her stepsister. Not one drop of milk would she give them, and she scolded them and drove them away. Before long they all hated her so that whenever she came near them they would put up their backs and spit at her; and then they would run and hide in the farthest corners. They became so timid that they seldom came near the barn; and soon the whole place was overrun by rats and mice.

She was just as hateful with the sparrows. When she went to the barn to sift the grain, the little birds came flying down to the yard. They hopped nearer and nearer, and at last they perched on the threshold of the barn. They turned their heads to one side and to the other and twittered: —

"Give us a little grain. Please give us a little grain."

Not one kernel of grain would she give them. She screamed at them and threw stones and drove them away so crossly that they came no more to the yard, but stayed all day long in the forest. They became so



THE CATS HAD A HARD TIME WITH THE NEW DAIRYMAID.

timid that even in the forest they were afraid; and if any one came near them, they flew still farther away in the greatest alarm.

In whatever the girl undertook she behaved in the same way; and before long every person and every animal on the farm disliked her. One day a message came that the mistress wished to see her. She went to the house and asked: —

"What 's got to be done now?"

Then said the mistress: —

"I have noticed that you do not take good care of your cows, and that you do all your other work very poorly; but I am going to give you a trial to see whether there is not something else that you can do better. Here is a little sieve. Now go to the spring and bring me back the sieve full of water; but see to it that you do not spill a drop by the way. This is your first test."

"If that stupid sister of mine did it, there can't be anything very hard about it," the girl muttered. She went to the spring and

began to pour water into the sieve; but of course it ran out again through the holes as fast as she could pour it in.

"How in the world can I make the thing hold water?" she said to herself; but she could not think of any way; and the sparrows did not help her as they had helped her stepsister. For an hour she poured in water, but the sieve leaked just as badly; and at last she was so angry that she threw it against a rock and broke it into pieces. Then she took up the fragments and went back to her mistress.

"That miserable old sieve has all come to bits," she said.

"Indeed? It must have been a very poor sieve," the mistress replied quietly; "but any one can see that something else is just as bad. I hoped to find some work that you were fit for, but you do poorly whatever you undertake."

The girl pouted and looked cross; but she dared not say a word, for if she had answered back, the mistress would have sent her

away before her time was up, and then she would have lost her wages.

Some time after this the girl received another message that the mistress wished to talk with her; so she went into the house and asked again: —

"What 's got to be done now?"

The mistress answered: —

"When we talked together before, I found not only that you were neglecting your cows, but that you were a poor water carrier. Now I will give you a new test to see whether there is not something that you can do well. Here are two skeins of yarn, one black and one white. Go down to the bank of the river and wash the black skein till it is snow-white and the white one till it is coal-black. See that you get it done before evening. This is your second trial."

The girl took the yarn, went down to the river bank, and began to wash; but, however much she washed, the black yarn would not turn white, and the white would not turn black. "How in the world can I

do it?" she thought, but she could not discover any way, and the little sparrows did not come to help her. At last she became so angry that she threw the white yarn into a mudpuddle.

"There!" she said, "the white is black enough now. I'll dip the black into a pan

of milk, and if that is n't white enough for her, she may fret as much as she chooses." So the girl took the dirty white yarn out of the puddle and dipped the black into a pan

of milk. Then she went to the house with the muddy skein in one hand and the milky skein in the other.

The mistress could hardly help laughing; but still she was angry, and she said: —

"You take care of cows very poorly, and you carry water and wash yarn even worse. I had hoped to find something that you were fit for; but I have already given you two trials and you have failed."

The girl pouted and looked cross, but she dared not say a word for fear of losing her wages.

A third time a message came that the mistress wished to see her. She went to the house and asked what more she had to do.

Then said the mistress: —

"The last time that we talked I found that you not only took miserable care of cows, but that you were a poor water carrier, and that when you were sent to wash yarn you behaved like a simpleton. Nevertheless, I will give you one more trial to see if there is not something that you can do.

I have had the two skeins of yarn cleaned, and here they are. Take them to the weaving room and weave a web. It must be done before sunset, and there must be neither knot nor break in it. This is the third and last test."

The girl took the yarn to the weaving room and began to weave a web as well as she could; but she did not know much about weaving, and even if she had been very skillful, she could hardly have succeeded with such tender yarn, for no little pussies came to help her. While she sat at the loom, her mistress came into the room.

"This yarn breaks all the time," said the girl. "It is good-for-nothing stuff."

"Yes, the yarn is good for nothing," the mistress replied quietly, and added, "But there is something else that is good for nothing; any one can see that. Whatever you undertake you do like a simpleton. I thought I could find something that you were fit for; but now I see you are of no use whatever."

The girl pouted and looked cross; but she did not dare to be saucy. She did not try to do any better than before, and she was just as unkind and careless as ever. The cows lowed in their discomfort, the cats spit angrily and mewed, and not one of the little sparrows ventured to come about the place. The girl herself found the days long and tiresome; but at length the usual time of service was past, and she went in to her mistress and said: —

"I want my wages. I'm not going to stay here any longer."

"Very well," replied the mistress. "I should have been glad to let you go before; indeed, I would willingly have given a good sum to get rid of you. About wages, — I never promised to give you any, and you have not earned any, for you have not been worth the food that you have eaten. Nevertheless, I will pay you for even such service as you have given. You may go up to the attic, and there you will see a number of boxes. Choose whichever one of them you

will; but do not open it till you have it where you intend to keep it; for if you do, you will will find nothing in it."

The girl did not stop to say "Thank you," but hurried up to the attic. There were the boxes just as they had been when her stepsister chose among them; and another little black box just like the one that she had taken stood in the corner.

"How shall I know which is the best one?" said the girl to herself, gazing at them greedily. "I suppose the little black one is like my stepsister's; but I mean to have more than she. I believe I will take the big red one."

She took a big red box, and went her way without troubling herself to say farewell to the mistress or the cows or the cats or the sparrows — and not one of them was sorry to see her go.

After she had walked a little way, she came to the great meadow. She went by the apple-tree, by the cow, by the oven, and through the fence; but of course the tree had

no apples, the cow had no pail, the oven had no bread, and nettles had sprung up all around the ruins of the fence. She had to go hungry and thirsty all day long, and her feet burned with the sting of the nettles. At last she was at the same place where she had come down. The ground over her opened, and somehow, she never knew exactly how, she rose gently through the water, and soon she was in the upper world again, standing by the well curb, with the great red box safe under her arm.

She went straight to the house, threw open the door and called: —

"Here I am, and now you will see something finer than a hencoop."

The woman was so wild with joy that she clapped her hands and screamed: —

"Oh, oh! You are here at last! Just see what a box you have! What a splendid red one it is! That is a different thing from the mean little black one in the hencoop."

"Yes, yes," said the girl, "but don't stand there and stare at it so stupidly. Find a

place to put it so I can see what is in it."

"Where should it be put but upstairs in the best room?" cried the woman, and she and her daughter ran upstairs so fast that they could hardly breathe when they came to the top. They set the box down; and then the girl took the key, put it into the lock and turned it. She and her mother stretched their heads forward to get the first glimpse of what was in the box; but they did not dare to keep their eyes wide open for fear that the glitter of what they expected to find in it should harm them. Then the girl raised the lid and — not jewels, but snakes and toads and lizards tumbled out, and a red flame, which was not the gleam of gold, flew up to the ridgepole and all around the walls. In a moment the whole house was in ashes, and so were the woman and her daughter.

The house, the stables, the sheds, even the well curb, burned, and nothing was left standing on the place except the hencoop.

This became a great, beautiful house, and in it the little stepdaughter lived in peace and happiness all her life. She still has the little black box, and the last time I went to see her, she showed it to me.

THE LITTLE WILD MAN

THE LITTLE WILD MAN

THERE was once a king who liked hunting better than anything else. Every morning he went out into the forest with his dogs, and every night he came back with a great load of game. It came to pass on one day, however, that, although he hunted all day long, he did not kill even a rabbit; and when he started for home, he was one of the crossest kings in all the world. He was riding along gloomily when he saw a strange figure directly in his path. He galloped up to it, and then he saw that it was a dwarf, or wild man of the forest. He sprang from his horse, caught it by the neck, and turned it around and around. It was very small, with sharp little black eyes and long gray hair as coarse as the moss on an old tree.

"Who are you, and where do you live?" asked the king.

The wild man looked up at him timidly from under his shaggy eyebrows, but made no reply.

"Who are you?" demanded the king again, but still there was no reply.

"Don't you know who is speaking to you?" cried the king angrily. "I am the ruler of this land."

The wild man looked up at him again, but said not one word.

Then the king was thoroughly angry. His attendants had gathered around him, and he said to them: —

"Bind that creature and carry him home. You will pay well for it if you let him get away."

The king was accustomed to meet his

courtiers every evening to drink and talk till midnight. That evening the drinking horns were filled and emptied as usual, but there was little of talk or merriment, for the king sat in gloomy silence, looking straight before him. At last he took hold of his horn and looked about him.

"What do you think of our hunt to-day?" he demanded.

Nobody was in haste to answer his question; but suddenly a bright thought occurred to one of the courtiers, and he replied cheerfully: —

"Everybody knows, Sir King, that if he searched the whole world over, he would not find another hunter as skillful as you. You never come home emptyhanded, and to-day you have done what would make any country proud to have you for its ruler."

"Eh! What 's that?" demanded the king, opening his eyes very wide.

"You have captured a wild man," responded the courtier. "No king ever did such a thing before; therefore it must re-

quire more skill than to kill a score of elks and hares."

When the king heard that, he looked greatly pleased. His face brightened, and he said: —

"That is true; he is a remarkable beast. What should you do with him?"

"You might kill him, or you might set him free," replied the courtier, "he seems to be a harmless creature; or you might keep him for a curiosity."

The king was silent for a little while. He was thinking: —

"If I keep him down in the courtyard, the people throughout the country will hear of him, and they will say, 'What a great hunter the king is!'" Then he raised his horn, and turning to his courtiers he said: —

"To-morrow morning I shall have a little hut built in the courtyard for the wild man. It shall be made of heavy timber, and the door shall have two strong locks. There shall be no window, but halfway up the wall

a little hole shall be cut. His food can be passed in through the hole, and whoever wishes to see him can look in. If any one lets the creature out, I will put him to death, no matter if it is my own son. I swear that I will." Then he lifted his horn and drank. The king had sworn so solemn an oath that the courtiers looked at one another in surprise; but they did not dare to say a word for fear of his anger.

The next morning the king sent for boards and beams and had the hut built just as he had said. There were two strong locks to the door and a small hole halfway up the wall. The wild man was put into the hut, the door was locked, and the king himself took the keys and hung them at his belt.

The wild man was now a prisoner and was never allowed to leave the hut; but no one ever heard him lament or even speak a word. Time passed, and war broke out. The king had to go to battle, and just as he was setting out, he said to the queen: —

"Land and folk are in your care, and you must govern the kingdom. There is one thing especially that you must not fail to do, and that is to keep the wild man well guarded so he cannot get away while I am gone."

"I will do my best," the queen replied.

The king said: —

"I know you will. Here are the keys of the hut. Hang them at your belt and let no one lay a finger on them."

The queen hung the keys at her belt and went with the king down to the seashore where his battleship lay. He kissed her in farewell and went aboard the vessel.

"Hoist the sails!" he commanded, "and push out from the land!" The vessel moved slowly away, and the king stood in the stern, waving his hand. The queen waved her hand and stood on the shore until the last pennant had sunk below the horizon. Then she turned away and went with the ladies of her court up to the palace.

The king was away a long time, but the queen ruled so wisely that everything went on well. She was very lonely, however, and sometimes when she was by herself, she could not keep the tears from dropping on her silken seam. Her greatest comfort was her only child, the little prince, a brave, truthful little fellow who was very dear to her and to his father.

One day when the prince was wandering about the palace grounds playing with his golden ball, he chanced to come near the wild man's hut. He began to throw the ball against the wall of the hut and to catch it when it rebounded. After a while it happened to fall into the hole, and the wild man threw it back. The boy threw it in again, and again it came back. This was great fun, thought the prince, and for a long time he and the wild man had the merriest sort of game. At last, however, there came a time when the ball was not thrown back. The little prince waited patiently, but no ball came.

"Go on!" he cried. "Throw the ball back." The wild man said not one word.

"Give me my ball," called the prince; but there was no reply.

The prince was only a little fellow, and after a while he began to cry. Between his sobs he pleaded: —

"Please, good wild man, give me my golden ball. Please give me my ball."

At first the wild man made no reply, but finally he said: —

"Prince, listen to this. Your father shut me up in this prison, though I never did the least harm to him or his; and the only way for you to get your golden ball again is to let me out."

"How could I let you out?" cried the prince. "Give me my golden ball, please do!"

"Just as soon as you have let me out," replied the wild man.

"But I can't do that," said the prince. "I can't unlock the door."

"You can if you do just what I tell you,"

HE AND THE WILD MAN HAD THE MERRIEST SORT OF GAME.

responded the wild man. "You have tumbled your hair a little, and you can go in to your mother and ask her to comb it. While she is doing that, lay your head on her knee, slip your hand up to her belt and take the keys of this hut. Hide them in your coat and be careful not to jingle them. Then run out here and unlock the doors. I will give you your ball, and you can hang the keys back without her knowing anything about it. She has so many keys that she will not notice that two are gone for a little while."

"I think that would be naughty," said the little prince.

"Was n't it naughty for your father to shut me up in this cage as if I were a wild beast?" demanded the wild man. "Is n't it naughty for you to be as cruel as he? Still, if you don't care to have the ball, why, you can let it stay."

The little prince wanted the ball very much. He thought a while about the matter, and at last he decided that since the

wild man had done no harm, he ought to be let out. Then he ran into the palace and asked his mother to comb his hair. She laid aside her sewing and began to comb out his tangled yellow curls. While she was doing this, he laid his head on her knee, reached up his hand, softly unhooked the keys, and hid them in his coat. After his hair had been combed, he ran away to the wild man, unlocked the door and let the prisoner out. The wild man locked the door again, and gave him back both the keys and the golden ball. Then he said: "I thank you very much. When the time comes that you need my help, I will do everything for you that I can. Farewell till then." So saying, he ran away towards the forest, and in the wink of an eye he was out of sight. The prince contrived to put the keys back in their place without his mother's knowing that he had had them; but somehow he did n't care to play with his golden ball any longer, and pretty soon he put it away.

Now when supper time came, the cook's

man went to the hole in the wall with food for the wild man; but no one appeared to take it from him. He called, "Hallo, there, hallo! Come and get your supper!" but no one answered. He peered into the hole, but it was growing so dusky that he could not be sure whether any one was there or not. He pounded on the wall and listened, but not a sound did he hear. He pounded again, but all was still. Then he dropped the food on the ground, and, his face white with alarm, ran to the palace and asked to speak with the queen.

"What has happened?" she cried when she saw how pale he was.

"The wild man, the wild man!" was all he could reply.

"What about the wild man?"

"He is not there."

"But he certainly is there," replied the queen. "He could not get out through the walls, and here are the keys hanging on my belt."

"Perhaps he is dead," the man suggested.

"That is easily found out," said the queen. "Go for two of the strongest men, and get a torch. I will go to the hut with you, and we will soon see what the trouble is."

The man lighted a torch, and, going in among the servants, he told the two strongest to go to the wild man's hut. The others were so curious that they all started up and followed. When they had come to the hut, the queen took the keys from her belt and unlocked the door. The servant held up the torch and she looked in; but, however much she looked, no wild man was to be seen; the hut was entirely vacant.

Now there was excitement indeed at the palace. The queen had the trumpets blown at once for all the people to come together in the courtyard. She divided them into companies and put a trusty man in charge of each company. Then she sent them away with orders to search for the wild man throughout the country, in field and forest, and to bring him back either dead or alive.

It was night, but they all took torches and began the search at once. They looked over the whole estate and through the forest, and they questioned everybody that they met; but not a trace of the wild man could they find. After they had been out for many days, they returned and told the queen that all their efforts had been in vain. She was greatly troubled, and as the days passed and the time of her husband's coming drew near, she was even more anxious, for she knew how angry he would be.

One fine morning a page came running to the queen and said: —

"O my Lady Queen, the king's vessel is in sight!" Then the queen and her ladies and the little prince went down to the shore to meet him. The king kissed his wife, and they walked up the hill together. Before they were fairly over the threshold of the palace, he asked: —

"Is the wild man safe?"

Then she had to tell the whole story of his escape; but there was little to tell

except that he had disappeared and locked the doors behind him, though the keys had not left her belt.

"Whoever has let him out shall be punished according to my oath," declared the king, "be he high or be he low."

Without waiting to take off his armor, he called the whole household together and ordered every one to tell all that he knew of the wild man's escape; but no one could tell him anything more than had already been heard from the queen, though even the children were questioned. Last of all the king demanded of the little prince: —

"Do you know anything about this matter?"

"Yes," answered the little fellow very soberly, "I let him out."

The queen turned pale, and so did all the others, for every one of them loved the little prince. The king was thunderstruck. He stood a long time with frowning brows and lips shut tightly together. Then he said in a strange, unnatural voice: —

"No one shall ever be able to say that I broke my oath even to save my own flesh and blood." He turned to two strong men who happened to be near him, and commanded: —

"Take the boy far away into the forest and kill him. Bring me his heart, that I may know you have obeyed me."

The queen and all the people fell upon their knees and begged for mercy for the prince; but the king only turned away and went into his hall and shut the door behind him. The men dared not disobey; so they took the little prince and went out into the forest. They walked on and on, for somehow they did not seem to find any place suited to such a deed. Finally one whispered to the other: —

"See here, do you want to do this thing?"

"No," the other answered, "I must say I do not. Let 's run away."

"I 'd rather do that than harm the little fellow," said the first, "but I believe I

know a better way out of it. Do you see that swineherd down in the valley? I will go to him and buy one of his little pigs. We can kill it and take the heart out to carry to the king. He is in such trouble that he will not be likely to look at it very closely."

"That's a good idea," whispered the other. "Go on, and I will wait here with the prince."

The man went down the hill to the swineherd and said: —

"I want a little pig. Will you sell me one of yours if I pay a good price?"

"I'll sell you the whole herd if you will pay well for them," replied the swineherd.

"One will answer," said the courtier, and he went back to the other courtier and the prince with a little pig under his arm. They went up into a cleft in the mountains, and there the two men killed the pig and took the heart out.

"We must go back and give this to the king," they said to the little prince; "but

do you go on. The next kingdom is beyond that mountain, and there you will be safe." The little boy thanked them for their kindness, and they went back to the palace and carried the pig's heart to the king.

"You have been faithful," he said, "and you shall be rewarded; but never come before my eyes again."

When the little prince was left alone in the forest, he walked on slowly and very sadly. He drank water from the brooks and ate nuts and berries. At length he came to the foot of a mountain. He caught sight of a tall pine-tree standing on its summit, and he said to himself: —

"I will climb that tree, and perhaps I can see the palace of some king."

It was a hard climb up the steep mountain side, but at last the boy was at the top. He climbed the tree and looked around. Far away to the north he could see a great palace that glittered in the sun, and thither he determined to go.

On the way he came to a field where

a little boy was ploughing. The boy was dressed in coarse clothes like those that shepherd boys wear, and suddenly it occurred to the prince that he himself was wearing such handsome clothes that he would surely be recognized because of them. "That will never do," he thought, and he determined to exchange with the boy.

"Good evening," he said.

"Good evening to you," responded the boy, and turned around. When he saw the prince, he dropped reins and whip and stood staring at him, his mouth wide open with astonishment.

"What is such a fine little lord out here for?" he exclaimed.

"Do you think that I am so very fine?" the prince asked.

"I should say so," answered the boy. "You are a regular little prince, you are."

"You are not bad at guessing," said the prince. "What do you say to exchanging clothes with me?"

"You don't mean it," cried the boy. "I

should have to give you something to boot, I know that; and I could n't, for I have n't anything besides these rags that I have on."

"We are in the same box so far as anything to boot goes," said the prince. "But hurry now, for if you don't, I shall go to some one else. It won't happen every day that a boy will come along and offer you a prince's clothes, I fancy."

They undressed and exchanged clothes. The boy put on the prince's velvet coat and plumed hat, and his little shoes with their handsome rosettes and their embroidery of gold and pearls from heel to toe. The prince put on the boy's rags. They were not so very whole or so very clean, but the prince was satisfied and nodded to the boy.

"Thanks to you," he said, "and may the exchange suit you." Then he lifted his ragged new cap and continued his journey. At last he came to the palace. He went in and asked: —

"Would the king like to hire me for a herdsman?"

THE BOYS UNDRESSED AND EXCHANGED CLOTHES.

"Yes, he needs one," was the reply.

So it was that the prince became a shepherd boy. In a few years he had become a strong, handsome young man. He did his work well; and as time passed, he forgot his trouble, until at last it scarcely came into his mind at all that he had once been a fine little prince.

The king whom the prince served had been married for some years. The queen had died, but she had left a little daughter who was now grown up and was the most beautiful girl in the kingdom. She was also wise and kindhearted, and every one said that the prince who won her for his wife would be a most fortunate man.

When the princess had completed her fifteenth year, she had great numbers of suitors, as one may well believe. She said "No" to them all, not only once, but twice and thrice; but every time that she said "No" to one, two others came in his place, and soon there were so many wooers that the king was at his wits' end to know how

to answer them without getting into quarrels with their respective kings. At last his patience was exhausted. He went to the chamber of the princess and said: —

"I really can't bear this any longer. If you yourself won't choose one of these princes for a husband, I will do it for you; and it won't be of any use to complain if you are not pleased."

He turned to go away, but the princess caught him by the button of his coat and said: —

"I suppose you will have to have your own way; but you surely can't expect me to take whoever happens to come. Let them try whether there is any one of them who can ride up the glass mountain and take a golden apple from my hand. The one who can do that, I will take for my husband, no matter who he is."

The king thought this a good idea, and he sent heralds throughout his kingdom and all the kingdoms round about, crying: —

"O hear ye, O hear ye! The man who

can ride up the glass mountain and take a golden apple from the hand of the princess shall have her for his wife. O hear ye, O hear ye!"

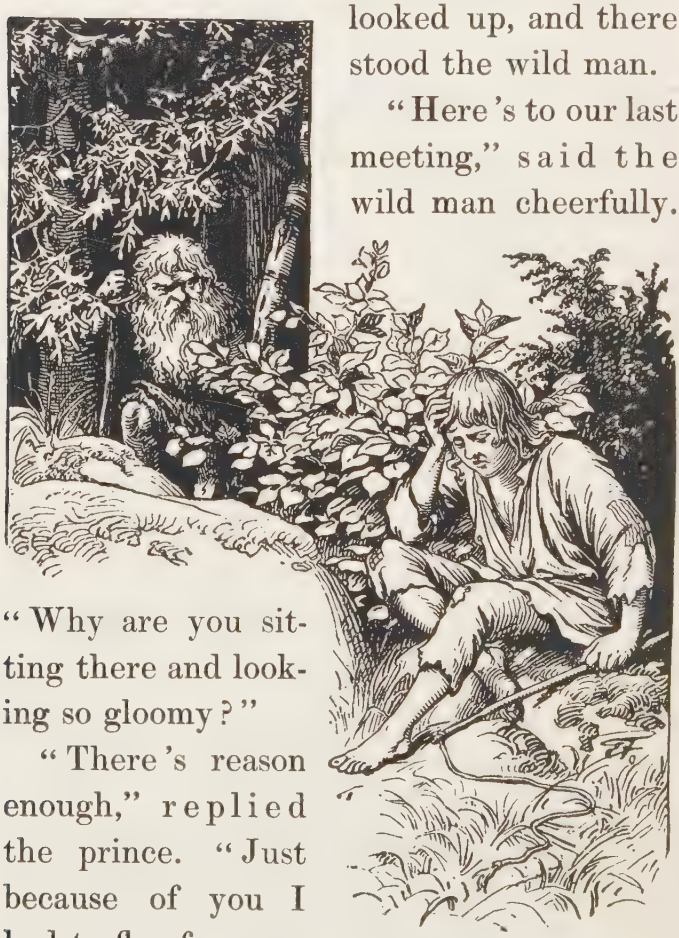
When the day that the king appointed had come, the princess dressed herself in her most splendid array, and, followed by the court ladies, went with great magnificence to the glass mountain. She seated herself on the summit, with a golden crown on her head and a golden apple in her hand. Every one could see how beautiful she was, and there was not a man in the kingdom who would not have been glad to risk breaking his neck for her sake. In the meadow at the foot of the mountain there was a vast assemblage of knights and princes who had all come on fine horses and in such glittering armor that it really hurt one's eyes to look at them. There were spectators too, and plenty of them, for every one who could ride or walk had come there to see who would be able to take the golden apple and so win the princess.

When everything was ready, the king ordered the trumpets to sound; and in an instant the suitors put spurs to their horses and started on their way up the mountain. Now the sides of this mountain were as smooth as ice and as steep as the roof of a church. The horses leaped up and slipped back; and that was all they could do. Some of the suitors broke their armor and some broke their bones, but no one could get even halfway up the mountain.

Of course all this made a tremendous uproar; for horses' hoofs were beating against the mountain, armor was rattling, squires were blustering, and people screaming; and the clamor was heard a long way off, even in the depths of the forest where the prince was herding his cattle. He knew what was going on, and he remembered that he was a prince, and that by right of birth he might have contended for the princess if only he had never met the wild man. He sat down upon a stone, leaned his head upon his hand, and fell into deep thought. Suddenly

he heard a crackling of the twigs. He looked up, and there stood the wild man.

"Here's to our last meeting," said the wild man cheerfully.



"Why are you sitting there and looking so gloomy?"

"There's reason enough," replied the prince. "Just because of you I had to flee from my father's kingdom; and here I sit herding cattle and have not so much as a horse and

a suit of mail so that I can try to ride up the glass mountain and win the beautiful princess."

"It 's easy enough to remedy a little thing like that," said the wild man. "You did me a great favor once upon a time, and I have not forgotten it. Come with me."

So saying, he took the prince by the hand and led him down into a deep cave. In the farthest corner hung a suit of armor made of the hardest steel, and so bright that it cast a blue gleam all through the cavern. Close at hand stood a handsome gray horse all saddled and bridled. He pawed the earth with his shoes of steel, and champed his steel bit so that the foam dropped down upon the ground.

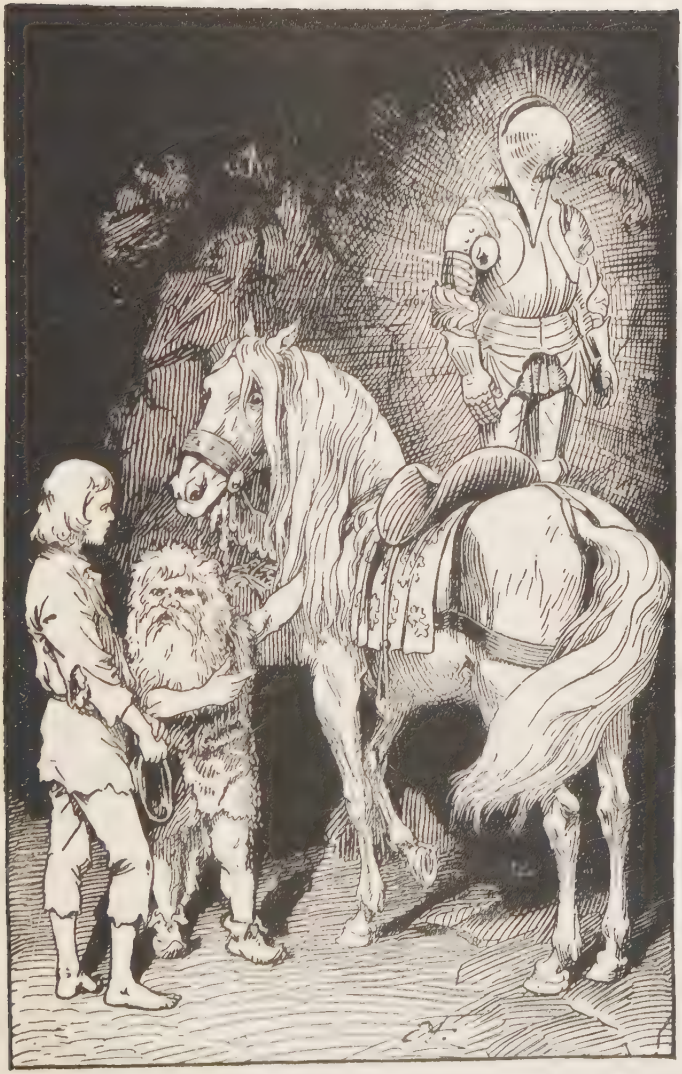
"Make haste now," bade the wild man. "Put on the armor and see whether you can ride up the glass mountain. I will take care of your cattle while you are gone."

The prince did not need to be told twice. As fast as ever he could he put on the steel helmet and the steel coat of mail, fastened

the steel spurs to his heels, hung the shield of steel on his arm and buckled the sword to his side. He was a real prince, and therefore he felt as light and free in the steel armor as a bird in the air or a fish in the water. He leaped into the saddle in such haste that every buckle jingled; and the moment he was mounted, he gave the horse loose rein and galloped away toward the glass mountain.

The king was about to have the trumpets blown as a signal that there would be no more riding that day; but at that moment he saw a horseman coming from the edge of the forest and galloping straight toward the mountain. He was clad in steel from top to toe, with a helmet on his head, a shield on his arm, and a sword at his belt; and he looked so knightly in the saddle on his handsome gray horse that it was a real pleasure to watch him.

"Who can he be?" the people asked one another. "He must have come from some distant kingdom."



CLOSE AT HAND STOOD A HANDSOME GRAY HORSE ALL SADDLED AND BRIDLED.

There was not much time to question and wonder, for scarcely had he come up from the meadow before he rose in his stirrups, drove his spurs into his horse's sides, and shot like an arrow straight up the glass mountain. People held their breath to watch him, and the princess sat ready to give him the golden apple. But when he was halfway up, he sprang from his horse, bowed low to the princess, threw himself into the saddle again, and rode down the mountain so fast that fire flashed from his horse's shoes. Then he galloped over the plain as swiftly as a bird flies, and disappeared in the forest.

"In all my life I never saw such riding as that," the king exclaimed.

"Did you watch the princess's face?" whispered the court ladies to one another. "There 's some one now to whom she will not say no."

On the following day the suitors were to make a second trial, and the princess went out in greater magnificence than before. There were greater crowds than ever, for

every one who could walk or creep had come to see who would win the princess. There were long lines of new suitors from distant lands, and all the old ones whose bones were whole. The trumpets sounded, and the eager company set out to gallop up the mountain; but they were less successful than on the previous day, and not one could get even a quarter of the way up to the princess.

The king was hoping that the stranger knight would come again, and so he waited a little after the riders had given up the contest. At last, however, he turned toward the trumpeters and was about to raise his hand as the signal for them to sound, when the stranger knight suddenly flashed out of the forest. He was all in white, for the wild man had given him a suit of mail of the purest silver, and a snowwhite horse. He shot up the glass mountain like a silver arrow, up, up, to the very summit. The Princess rose to give him the golden apple; but again he bowed courteously before her, rode down the mountain so fast that he

looked like a streak of silver, and disappeared in the woods like a beam of moonlight.

"I'd like to have him for a son-in-law," declared the king frankly.

"The princess and her father agree in that," whispered the court ladies.

On the following day came the third and last trial. The princess dressed herself more splendidly than ever, and went to the glass mountain with even greater magnificence. Every one in the kingdom who could creep or crawl had come either to ride or to look on, and there were great companies of new suitors from still more distant lands. The knights tried their very best, but not one of them could get even one eighth of the way up the mountain.

Before sounding the trumpet the king waited longer than on the previous day, for he so hoped that the stranger knight would come again; but at last there was no excuse for further delay. He gave the signal, the trumpeters rounded their mouths and

HE RODE SO FAST HE LOOKED LIKE A STREAK OF SILVER

raised their instruments; but before they could make a sound, the knight came galloping out from the edge of the forest. The wild man had given him a gold-maned horse and a superb suit of mail of the purest gold, and he looked like a flash of sunshine as he rode straight up the side of the mountain. The princess rose and held out the golden apple. He bowed himself to the ground before her and took the apple from her hand. Then he leaped suddenly upon his horse, rode down the mountain so fast that his track looked like a streak of gold, galloped into the forest, and vanished like a shooting star.

Then there was a merry time indeed in the meadow round about the mountain. The crowds of people threw their caps high up in the air and shouted so loud that they could be heard halfway through the forest. Horses neighed and arms clashed. The trumpeters did not wait for any orders, but blew till their cheeks were round and red as Christmas apples. When the uproar had

quieted a little, the king stood up and cried in a loud voice that the champion in gold

had won the prize. The princess herself said nothing, but all the people knew what to think, for they had seen that she turned

both red and white when the prince took the apple.

The next thing was to find out who the golden champion was, for no one knew him. Everybody expected him to appear at the palace to claim his prize, and the king and the princess were most anxious of all; but one day after another passed and he did not come. The princess grew pale and sad. The king went about the palace muttering, "Most extraordinary, most extraordinary." The suitors began to exchange glances and to say to one another, "She 'd far better have taken one of us." At last the king would endure this no longer. He sent his heralds about to proclaim a general assembly to be held at his palace.

"Let every man, high or low, rich or poor, present himself at the palace," the heralds shouted, "for on that day will the princess choose one of them to be her husband and receive half of the kingdom! If she fails to make a choice, then will the king choose for her. O hear ye, O hear ye!"

The king need not have issued any command that the people should come; for every mother's son in the land was only too glad to put on his best clothes and hasten to the palace gates long before the hour for opening them. When the time had come, the princess was led out of the palace. She was dressed more magnificently than ever, but she looked grave and a little unhappy. She walked about among the people with her father, looking at one and another as he bade, but with the utmost indifference. Suddenly her face brightened, and she sprang forward crying, "Here he is! Here he is!" and before the king could say a word to hinder her, she had thrown her arms around the neck of a tall young man wearing the broad-brimmed hat and the long gray cloak of a shepherd. The collar was drawn up so that it partly hid his face, but it fell aside; and then, in spite of the presence of the king, shouts of merriment arose from the whole company, for everybody knew that this was the king's shepherd.

"Laugh if you choose," cried the princess, "but this is the only husband I will ever have."

"Oh, my daughter," besought the king in the greatest perplexity, "don't give me a son-in-law who isn't a king's son."

"But I'm as much a king's son as you are a king," retorted the young man with a merry laugh.

Then he dropped off his long cloak, and the people did not jeer any more; for, behold, instead of the gray herdsman a handsome young prince appeared, dressed in gold from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. In his hand was the princess's golden apple, and so every one knew that he was the champion who had ridden up the glass mountain.

"You would have no one but a king's son for your son-in-law," he continued; "but I would not have even a king's daughter for my bride until I was sure that I was the one she wanted."

At this, as you may well believe, there

"I'M AS MUCH A KING'S SON AS YOU ARE A KING," RETORTED THE YOUNG MAN WITH A MERRY LAUGH.

was shouting that was shouting, and then the prince told the whole story of his coming into the kingdom in the clothes of the little shepherd boy whom he had met in the fields. As soon as he had come to the end of his tale, the king began to prepare for the wedding, for he meant to have more magnificent festivities than had ever been seen in his kingdom or in any other kingdom.

After the wedding celebration had been going on for seven days, the prince took his beautiful young bride and a retinue long enough to go three times around the glass mountain, and went to visit his father and mother. They wept for joy to see their son again, and they laughed for joy to see their new daughter; but with all the crying and the laughing they were very happy.

The prince now ruled over half of his father-in-law's kingdom; and when he returned to his own realm, he carried with him the two men who had saved his life in the forest, and they became his most trusted councillors.

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